ARENA

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EDITOR'S NOTE

"European, with no iron curtain"—we have been called. Which describes our intention aptly enough. Always remembering that the mind and memory have their iron curtains too, more palpable than that political screen invented and erected by the sanctimonious warmongers of the West, on which to project the magic lantern slides of their crude and tawdry fantasy.

This issue of *Arena* lifts a curtain of shame which has been allowed to cloak one of the most astonishing and appalling literary phenomena of our time. After ten years, the whole of the living literature of Spain is still being created and produced *in exile;* scattered all over the world, it still appears, still develops, still finds its way home to its own people by ways as devious and difficult as the conditions under which most of the writers live.

This is terrible commentary in itself upon the state of that country, and upon the conscience of an intellectual world which was so vociferous ten years ago in defence of culture. Yet clearly for the Spanish writers exile has not meant uprooting. Because their literature has not withered in these ten heartbreaking years, the true soil of Spain must still be good and fruitful.

Add to this picture the figures of two of the world's most celebrated and popular poets, both untiring champions of the liberation of Spain, Pablo Neruda and Aragon. To-day Neruda is exiled too from his native Chile, whose most illustrious citizen he is; and the French authorities have seen fit to deprive Aragon of his civil rights! Add one more: America's leading progressive novelist, Howard Fast, awaits a sentence of imprisonment for aiding Spanish refugees.

There is the pattern which was once symbolized by Spain. It can be seen on which side of the world the iron walls are closing in upon the people's hope of life and their opportunities of free expression. If we can do no more than keep a foot in the door, we have done something.

Nancy Cunard

DECADE OF EXILE

The Intellect of Spain is today in other Lands.

Unless otherwise stated, all the translations of poems are by myself. N.C.

THREE THINGS NOTICED BY A FRENCH WOMAN WHO HAS just been in Madrid serve to set the scene inside Spain today. A Spaniard told her in a matter of fact way: "*Los intelectuales?* Why there are hardly any left, because they have either been shot or are living in exile." As she walked about Madrid she noticed proof of an illiteracy even worse than that before the advent of the Republic in 1931. Next to the names of many streets in this great European capital was "a small rebus in mosaic" illustrating the meaning of the letters. For instance, she was in the Calle de la Luna looking at a sign of the crescent moon. (Set against that the way the Republican soldiers during the Civil war, those who were illiterate, kept studying in the very trenches. That, yes, I have seen). The third thing was this: on the table of each room reserved for the cyclists of the Tour de France, which passed for a moment in Spanish territory, lay an envelope and inside it were the words: "Greetings from the political prisoners and victims of Francoist persecution. Remember us, you who are free."

Who, then, are the intellectuals living in exile? Practically all of the best and foremost writers, poets, University and other Professors, educators, scientists, artists, many musicians, film and theatre specialists, the acknowledged brains of the country.

There is JOSE BERGAMIN, the leading Catholic writer and philosopher, founder of the important review, "Cruz y Raya." RAFAEL ALBERTI and his wife MARIA TERESA LEON—Alberti, considered the best of all the younger living Spanish poets, Maria Teresa an excellent journalist, critic, conférencière. MANUEL ALTOLAGUIRRE and his wife CONCHA MENDEZ, both poets, as

internationally known as Alberti and Maria Teresa. JUAN RAMON JIMENEZ, *doyen* of Spanish poetry. LUIS CERNUDA, a beautiful poet, for years "lector in Spanish" at Emmanuel College, Cambridge. EMILIO PRADOS another poet. CESAR ARCONADA, author and poet. Professor WENCESLAO ROCES, writer, and Secretary of the Alianza de los Intelectuales Españoles in Mexico. The great pamphleteer, MANUEL DOMINGUEZ BENAVIDES, with his brilliant reportages of the Spanish war, who died in Mexico in 1947. ENRIQUE DIEZ CANEDO, famous poet of an older generation, who also died there in exile. JORGE GUILLEN, another *doyen* of Spanish poetry. LEON FELIPE, dynamic poet and professor. JUAN LARREA, scholar, writer, at one time archive-keeper of Spanish letters. CONSTANCIA DE LA MORA, author of the admirable "In lieu of Splendour" on the Spanish war, once wife of General Cisneros, Commander-in-Chief of the Republican Air Force. ISABEL DE PALENCIA, ex Ambassador to Sweden, whose book "Smouldering Freedom" on the Spanish war-years and after is known to English readers (Gollancz, 1946). All of the following, known chiefly as poets: PEDRO GARFIAS, JOSE HERRERA PETERE, JUAN REJANO, BERNARDO CLARIANA, RAFAEL DIESTE, LORENZO VARELA, ANTONIO APARICIO, AUGUSTIN BARTRA, PEDRO SALINAS, F. GINER DE LOS RIOS, GUILLERMO DE TORRE, JUAN JOSE DOMENCHINA, ROSA CHACEL, ERNESTINA CHAMPOURCIN, MARIA ENCISO, RAFAEL GRENELL, JOSE MORENO VILLA. And MAX AUB, poet, playwright, film-maker, technician. JUAN VICENS, librarian-specialist, journalist, head of Republican Propaganda during the Spanish war. ALEJANDRE CASONA, playwright. JUAN CHAVAS, professor and writer. MARSARITA XIRSU, the famous actress. RIVAS CHERIFF, theatrical producer. CARLOS CASTILLO, lawyer and sometimes writer (who translated Dzelepy's important book on the Spanish war and Non-Intervention), who died recently in Mexico.

This long list—and one must add to it JOSE RENAU, painter, one of the world's best cartoonists and Minister of Fine Arts during the Spanish war; MANUEL ANGELES ORTIZ, painter of international fame, now back in France and an intimate friend of Picasso; MIGUEL PRIETO, painter; RAMON GAYA, painter; SEGARRA, architect; LUIS BAGARIA, cartoonist and caricaturist, who died in Cuba in 1940; ALBERTO, an admirable sculptor—this long list constitutes a sort of "Consortium of Intellect against Fascism." And yet more names must be added: ARTURO BAREA. author of that

superb trilogy, "The Forging of a Rebel;" RAMOS OLIVEIRA, writer, historian, both of these living in England. There is also RAMON SENDER, well-known to English readers as an exciting and vivid novelist, now in the U.S.A. after years in Mexico.

In France are men of high intellect and culture: the poet JOSE MARIA QUIROGA I PLA, son-in-law of Unamuno, founder of the Union de los Intelectuales Españoles in Paris, now a delegate at UNESCO. ARTURO SERRANO PLAJA, poet and writer. CORPUS BARGA, a great journalist and poet. EMILIO S. NADAL, historian. EFREN HERNIDA, poet, JUAN-MIGUEL ROMA, poet and teacher. LUIS GUERENA, poet, founder of the literary review "Medusa." ANTONIO ESPINA, poet, who managed to leave Spain about two years ago, while in Spain still is another excellent and well-known poet whom I cannot name, but whose sympathies are certainly what they were in 1936. MARIA CASARES, daughter of the ex-Minister, young and beautiful actress, living in Paris. BALBINO GINER, painter, Prix de Rome. VICTOR ALBA, journalist, author of the wonderful reportage-book on Franco Spain, "Spanish Insomnia." G. SANCHE BOXA, journalist, author of a valuable document on the Spanish Monarchy of today. SANZ MARTINEZ, archæologist, poet, translator. And there are of course a great many more, famous surgeons, doctors, scientists, professors, archæologists—all the members of the Alianza de los Intelectuales Españoles in Paris, of the Alianza in Mexico, and of the Spanish Institute in London, in Queen's Gate.

CASALS, the greatest cellist and one of the finest musicians in the world, also lives in exile, in a lovely little Pyrenean town, where he spent all of World War 2, often in danger of being arrested, his anti-fascist feeling being well known. In vain Franco sent emissaries, as did Hitler and Mussolini, to woo him to their countries. Intransigent, Pau Casals (his name, "Pau" means peace in Catalan, the language that Franco has prohibited) has also refused to play in Britain as long as British policy continues to support the present regime in Spain. Both of the greatest living Spanish artists—Picasso and Casals—have done an enormous amount for the Republican Spaniards, their countrymen, ever since the outburst of Fascism in Spain. Another great Catalan, POMPEU FABRA, once Minister of the Catalan Government and specialist in the language, has died in exile in France.

Who, at the International P.E.N. Club Congress in London during the war does not remember the words of the (exiled) Catalan P.E.N. Secretary, Dr. Batista i Roca: "Most of the first-rate writers and professors are out of Spain; thus Spain has become a sort of monster, with the soul outside the body." That was in 1941. In Spain the fresco remains the same as it was when Franco came to power over the whole of the country in 1939, though, here and there, even more sombre and violent parts have been filled in. The power of the Church is great as never before; the Falange controls all that the Church does not, and both work together with the Police and the Army. The extinguisher is applied to everything progressive or independent-minded in letters, the arts and education.

What has come out of Spain in the way of books? I can think only of that sombre, terrifying and exciting novel of CELA (translated into English in 1946) published in London, "The Life of Pascual Duarte," and the one called "Neant" ("Nothingness") by Carmen Laforet. Ten years of Franco has also meant the burning of books too long to list here, Spanish, foreign and even classics and Protestant versions of the Bible.

Among the writers and poets executed at different times or less directly killed by Franco are FEDERICO GARCIA LORCA and MIGUEL HERNANDEZ (the latter, last of all reported to have died of "starvation in the Polier Jail, Madrid in 1945," but thought to have died of tuberculosis in prison in Orihuela in 1942); MORON, the poet of Huelva and friend of Antonio Machado; the two Basques poets, LAUAXETA and URKIAGA; Fr. ARIZTIMUNO, apologist of Christian Democracy; CARLOS RAHOLA, Catalan historian; BESTEIRO, Professor of Logic at Madrid University, a moderate Socialist educated in England, who was even in agreement with the betrayal of Madrid that ended the war. PUYOL, the cartoonist who did such admirable cartoons during the Spanish war. ANTONIO MACHADO, too, must be set down as a victim of Fascism, having died of its causes directly after reaching France in 1939.

There are others—how many more—whose names we do not know.

This, then, is briefly the picture. But not all of it. The Guerilla warfare that sprang up at the end of the Spanish war has been going on ever since, developing, continually better organized in

many different regions. Vivid accounts of it have been given by the Spanish journalist JESUS IZCARAY (who went on a long clandestine visit to the Guerrilleros).

Meanwhile, in the lands of exile and especially in the Latin American States, the Republican Spaniards have accomplished a great deal. Examples spring to mind: the discoveries made by two archæologists in Colombia. The five, ten or more educational institutes founded by Spanish professors in Mexico. The score and more of new publishing houses that prosper in the Argentine, Chile and Mexico. Fine, modern bookshops as well, of which the biggest are the five "Libreria de Cristal" of the huge EDIAPSA publishing Co, in Mexico City, organized and run by the Spaniard, RAFAEL XIMENES SILES. The discoveries of Spanish doctors have received praise internationally, as have the taste and skill of Spanish poets in editing literary and art reviews. Main thanks from the Spaniards go to Mexico for it is there that most of them found the ready welcome and aid they needed—from each of the three Mexican Presidents of these last ten years, from Mexican intellectuals, and from the mixed Spanish-Indian-Mexican workers. Everywhere, in every country where the Spanish Republicans live and work, they have contributed to national life full measure of their talent, their intellect and their integrity.

The half million people who came out of Spain between January 28 and the middle of February, 1939 in the Exodus from Catalonia on the fall of Barcelona, began their exile in the greatest misery. The official attitude of France saw to that. The Press, with few exceptions, was vitriolic about them. Very different was the attitude of the large numbers of French people who came forward asking for a chance to help. In some cases, their request was granted. A group of French intellectuals (Aragon, Eluard, Cassou, Jean Richard Bloch, Renaud de Jouvenel, Blech, Tzara, Pozner and many more) had organized immediate aid. But nearly all the Spanish intellectuals spent several weeks, before they could even be located, in that icy, wind-raked February-March hell of the open-air concentration camps on the shore between Perpignan and the frontier. Gradually, as quickly as possible friends and organizations came to their rescue. The British Joint Aid Committee did good work in Perpignan. After innumerable official delays. most of the Spanish intellectuals went on their way to Mexico.

Chile, Santo Domingo, Cuba and other Latin American Republics. Only CESAR ARCONADA and the sculptor ALBERTO, as far as I know, went to the U.S.S.R.

The hell of exile began right at the frontier. The value of the peseta (with the Spanish war not even ended) had been obliterated overnight. A thousand peseta note (normally worth about 10,000 francs) was sometimes taken "as a souvenir" in exchange for 1 franc. A few days after his arrival, Don ANTONIO MACHADO—Spain's most honoured poet—collapsed and died of exhaustion and heart-break on February 22, in the little Hotel Quintana in Collioure. Thus ended the life of the most cherished, the most *castizo*—pure and authentic—of the Spanish poets of the older generation. CORPUS BARGA, important Spanish journalist, was with him. Don Antonio died of sorrow, mainly perhaps, in destitution. Lines he had written at one time came true:

And when the day shall come of the ultimate voyage
And the ship sails—the ship that will never return—
You will find me aboard her, unburdened of all possessions,
Almost as stripped to the skin as the sons of the sea.

All those terrible days of February, the civilians—men, women, children—the aged and the sick, the wounded (crutches and gangrene to the fore) and then the Army, and behind it Lister's regiments that protected the retreat, were tramping in, some of them through the deep snow of the Pyrenean passes, hedged around with French, Arab and Senegalese guards. It was heartrending to hear the harsh "allez, allez" of the officers of the Sister-Republic to see the callous, often violent way that husbands and fathers were torn from their families. These lines of the Catalan painter MARIN, give a picture of those roads:

"Defeated" "Dejected" "With no country"
we trudge and still we trudge
to leaden-coloured skylines
that sombrely wait ahead,
and it is night
worn-out we fall to earth
and cannot tell if there is warmth or cold
and it is day
we trudge and still we trudge
till plains tilt steep as mountains

cold glances indicate the path
that leads nowhere
we are to be buried here alive
no longer men no longer anything
at last they fling us down a crust of bread
and a black face regards us
Civilization
its welcome to the defeated.

All day long, standing, sitting, shivering on the sands of Argeles and St. Cyprien, sleeping at night, if lucky, under suitcases and bits of clothing, in bitterly cold weather. Some of the poets did somehow write a little. It was Arconada who told me: "One could never do anything consecutive; besides one had got so weak, so ill." Here is a poem by AUGUSTIN BARTRA, now in Mexico, written in Argeles, translated by the American poet Rolfe Humphries:

SPRING AT ARGELES.

Sand, and still more sand,
Trampled a thousand times, sand without pathway,
sand without a sowing,
Drowned in anonymous chaos we live in fever,
Circled by the mirage of a new destiny.
The sky comes down to kiss the mountains,
But the longest kiss is for the sea
Where the horizon widens.
On the shore each person seeks a gull for his longing,
Or coloured stones for the eyes bereft of their native
light:
We feel the warm air from the souls of the flowers,
Food of a miracle that we shall never see.
No one can say how much he would give for the sight
of a tree,
But every one knows the only spring colour we know,
The only colour of spring is that which is hidden
in the capes of the Spahis that guard us.

At the beginning was Lorca's death, at the end was Machado's. The finest of the younger poets, the finest of the older poets. And

it was probably Machado who wrote the best of the many fine poems on Lorca's death.

ANTONIO MACHADO (1875-1939): an Andalusian of Seville is considered, with JUAN RAMON JIMENEZ, the father of the New Spanish poetry, the "poet of deepest root," of the very soil of Spain. Although Andalusian by birth, he had his Castilian basis too, and wrote many books about that region such as a Campos de Castilla" (poems). If his work has the tragic quality of Andalusia, it holds also the serenity of Seneca, another Andalusian. Machado was a pupil of GINER DE LOS RIOS (the reformer of public education), and a friend of Reuben Dario, the great Nicaraguan poet. For a time he was Professor of French at Soria. He is a poet very close to the people and folklore of Spain; the poems in "Nuevas Canciones" are said by some to be "almost Senecan, almost bitter in their stark lucidity and implacableness." His writing is always spare, sheer and very pure.

FEDERICA GARCIA LORCA, the poet of Granada. Besides being a great poet, he was a very good musician at the piano and greatly gifted in experimental things of the theatre. He founded his own company, La Barraca, and went pioneering with it to many different Spanish regions, playing in tiny villages as well as in the towns. He gave classical plays and his own; he loved and understood the people of the soil, the peasants and the gypsies; the savour of his love is in his every poem. He hated and mocked the Guardia Civil—the police-guards who patrolled the land in pairs, harassing the gypsies and the poor peasants, and looking as if they belonged to the times of Goya.

Why did they kill him despite his aloofness from any direct politics? Will the "charge" ever be known? One doubts it. Some have said his death was due to a personal vengeance; Some that he was shot on account of having been confused with RAFAEL ALBERTI, the other great and famous poet against whom a death warrant had been issued, and who was in hiding in the hills of Mallorca. Yet other Republican Spaniards say that the Francoists hated him because he was so great a friend of MARGARITA XIRGU, the actress, and of FERNANDO GINER DE LOS RIOS, the writer then Spanish Ambassador in Washington—both of them pronounced enemies of Fascism. Lorca was warned of the danger and took refuge, first with his great friend, the composer MANUEL DE FALLA, and, then with an admirer of his, the Falangist poet Luis

Rosales, who was purposely sent away on a mission by the authorities of Fascist-held Granada. After that they came to fetch Lorca, at the end of August, 1936. They held him for two days and then took him out and shot him just before dawn, under the moon, in a field on the edge of Granada. Otero Seco, a friend of his, says that the body was buried in a corn-field. And ever since, the peasants have never sowed that patch with wheat. Instead, they have put wild poppy seed on the spot, so that every year a blaze of scarlet shows through the green and gold of the corn. And for this many have been jailed.

ALBERTI'S poem on the death of Lorca is famous, beautiful and subtle. It says "It was *my* death that came to you, Federico. So, with my life, if it continue, I will live for you, I will do the best I may." Others are by NERUDA, by the Cuban NICOLAS GUILLEN (a whole lovely part of his Epic, "España," 1937) by LEOPOLD URRUTIA, and by several English poets as well. This is the one by ANTONIO MACHADO:

THE CRIME.

We saw him walk between the rifles
The length of the long street,
Into the cold of the meadows,
Under the stars of the dawn.
Here they killed Federico
As soon as the first light showed.
The firing-squad of the killers
Dared not look him in the face,
Muttering they closed their eyes:
"Not even God can save him!"
Federico fell to the ground,
Blood was on his brow,
Lead was in his entrails;
And the crime was in Granada—
Mark this—and pity Granada, his own Granada.

THE POET AND DEATH.

We saw him walk at her side
alone with no fear of her scythe
the sun climbs from tower to tower, the hammers
rang on the anvils, rang and rang in the forges.

And Federico went chatting
with Death, and wooed her, and Death listened to him.
"I heard in all my latest songs, my friend,
the clap of your dry palms,
an icy current came, and your silver sickle
laid its edge to my tragedy.
I will sing you back the flesh you lack
and the eyes that are emptiness,
ringlets where the wind has played,
lips of red where the kiss was found . . .
Sweet vagabond, now as ever, my Death,
how good to go along with you,
under the skies of Granada, of my Granada."
We saw him on this walk . . .
Come now, my friends,
out of your stones and dreams, and in the Alhambra
set up a tomb for a poet,
beside a fountain where the waters weep
for as ever as they murmur:
The crime was done in Granada, his own Granada.

Time and again the poets have said in their lands of exile that the dear MACHADO, LORCA and MIGUEL HERNANDEZ are always with them in spirit. And if the other two represent youth and age, Hernandez may represent the generation between. Very different are the poems of these types, yet, the same themes of love-death, earth and the people of Spain, and hatred of oppression, run through them all. Very pure poets, their symbolism is individual indeed, but always clear.

MIGUEL HERNANDEZ was born in 1912 in Orihuela, Alicante, the son of a herder of goats; his life began with the flocks and he was often called "the shepherd poet." His gifts and study turned him to letters. He remained one of the people, loved best as the leader of the youth of the fields and factories. During the war he was a Commissar in the Vth Army and fought and organized and disseminated his faith in the youth of the workers of Spain. A beautiful, straight, vibrant and startling poet, he did not leave Spain at the end of the war for he was on one of the Madrid fronts. Caught by the enemy, he was imprisoned more than once. Though the circumstances of his death are not established, it

seems certain that he died in gaol of hunger or tuberculosis. A. L. Lloyd has translated the title-poem of his best-known book, "The Winds of the People," of which this is a noble part:

THE WINDS OF THE PEOPLE

You Basques of armoured stone,
you brave Asturians,
lively Valencianos
and tempered Castillians,
worked-over like the soil
yet as airy as wings,
Andalusians like lightning,
born amidst guitars
and forged in torrential
smithies of tears,
rye-field Estremadurans,
Galicians of calm rain,
dour trustful Catalans,
pure-born of Aragon,
dynamiting Murcians
so fruitful in your race,
men of Navarre and Leon, masters
of hunger, sweat and the axe,
kings of the mineral kingdom
and lords of the work of tillage,
you who amidst the roots,
like noble roots your selves,
go from life to death,
go from nothing to nothing:
you men of the scant grasslands,
they would set on you a yoke,
a yoke that you must shatter
in two across their *backs'*
The twilight of the oxen
heralds a sparkling dawn.
The oxen are dying, clad,
in the humble smell of the barn.
But the eagles and the lions,
and behind them the sky,
and the arrogant bulls
are calm, will not die.

MANUEL ALTOLAGUIRRE was one of the first of the Spanish poets to get to the New World (I think he actually escaped from one of the camps) due to the help of Eluard, Supervielle and Stephen Spender, whom he thanks "for ever" in a note in his "*Nube Temporal*," poems written and published at his "Veronica Editions" in La Habana in 1939. He began publishing here and produced many lovely editions, such as "Lluvias Enlazadas," poems by Concha Mendez, his wife.

CESAR ARCONADA, to my joy, I was able to get out of Argeles and put up for several weeks in my house. And it was EMILIO PRADOS, whom I'd known a little in Spain, who seemed to close the terrible book of the Exodus. I always see him sitting alone, sombre and brooding and speechless in exhaustion in that little hotel in Port Vendres, alone after all the pitiful crowds had gone. And then he too was off to Mexico. CONSTANCIA DE LA MORA, MANUEL ANGLES ORTIZ, the painter, and CARLOS CASTILLO of the Ministry of Finance. I had met them all, head-on, unexpectedly, coming up that painful road out of Spain—friends who had been specially close to me only three months before in Barcelona. By the beginning of World War Two most of the Spanish intellectuals had gone to the Latin Americas.

In his Lecture "Spanish Poetry in Exile in the Americas," given in Paris in December, 1947, FRANCISCO GINER DE LOS RIOS said: "The poetry of Spain went into exile at the end of the war, and with it the soul or spirit of Iberia." And then quoted these simple, effective lines addressed to the Generalissimo:

Yours is the farm
And the house
And the horse
And the pistol . . .
Mine the old voice of the land.
You've laid your hands on it all,
Leaving me stripped to wander about the world,
But it's dumb *I leave* you*—dumb.*
And how are you going to get in the corn,
And keep the fires going,
If I go away with the songs?

what a ring it has . . . and how characteristic of nearly all of the Spanish poets in exile is this closeness to folk-poetry with its deep

ties with the earth and history of Spain. Not that the sense of international events is lacking. These poets look forward as well as backward, and link with the unceasing struggle within Spain.

RAFAEL ALBERTI'S "Free Peoples—What of Spain?" gives us the key-notes: nostalgia for Spain, tributes to her Guerrilleros, faith in Franco's overthrow. The first verse of the poem declares:

Now peace has come. Weeping, the olive branch
That was uprooted turns to green again
Above the hearths, and life wells up anew,
A tide in the anguished hearts—battered and shaken
Life, yet life again. Life has returned.

The twelve other verses of this poem in irregular rhyming alexandrines, go on to say that life can be beautiful for all once more —except for the Spanish fighters. The seed sings in the furrow, peace is in the heavens, on land and sea, all roads are good for man's return. But for the Spaniards exile, gaol and death. Her Guerrilleros fight on, the night their shield, the mountain-light their sustenance. Yet, they are not alone, for there are people who go down on their knees to salute their flag. Peace again—the eyes of children thrill at the sight of the stars. But for the children of Spain pass only the comets of hunger and death. The last verse:

Peoples of the world who are free! Today the poet
No longer sings but thunders in his rage;
No peace is there, no peace in the planet
As long as the heart will not listen—O peoples,
You who are free, behold: Spain is not voiceless,
She bleeds, she's ablaze in my words, she calls for your aid!

Alberti and his wife, have lived in the Argentine ever since 1939, where he has published, among other work, *Entre la Clavel y la Espada* and *Pleamar*, both volumes of poems, lyrics, memories of the struggle, nostalgia for Spain.

MANUEL ALTOLAGUIRRE came to Mexico after several years of publishing in Cuba, and was working in films and writing criticism when I saw him last in Mexico City in 1948. These few lines from a recent volume illustrate not only his delicate style but also the mood of nostalgia in some of his poems:

Remember all the hours
Remember all the many things,
Set a borderline of whitest cloud
Around yon grove of memories
And die beneath it:
Within its shadow.

During the Spanish war his *Ediciones del Este,* produced by the soldiers at the front, published Neruda's beautiful poems *España en el Corazón* and Emilio Prados' *Cancionero de la Guerra Civil.* Altolaguirre is famous everywhere that Spanish is understood, and lived before the Spanish war some time in London, where he was printer and publisher and produced a review called "1616," (the year that Cervantes and Shakespeare died on the same day, April 23rd). His best-known works are *Las Islas Invitadas* (poems) and a Biography of Garcilaso de la Vega. He is an Andalusian of Malaga, very southern, very "gypsy," very romantic, and very whimsical, a most loveable person.

EMILIO PRADOS is another Andalusian, now living in Mexico, doing reviews but living in the solitude that seems characteristic to him. As characteristic as this profound little poem from his recent book *Jardin Cerrado:*

I lose myself in solitude
and in it find myself again,
imprisoned in myself am I
as in the fruit is closed the stone.
Looking within myself I find
the thing I seek is far away,
from fear of never reaching it
I lock myself more deeply in.
Thus both within me and without
the scales of exile now are balanced . . .

In Mexico too are JUAN REJANO, one of the best of the youngest poets, editing the Literary Supplement of *El Nacional,* of Mexico City. PEDRO GARFIAS, the soldier-poet who never wrote but improvised the "romances" which have been said to have inspired Lorca. His poems were published at the front, and often, as Commissar de Batallon, he recited his verses to the soldiers from the top of a rock. In England on his way to Mexico he wrote *Eaton Hastings;* one of his plays written in Mexico deals with the resistance-hero Agustin Zoroa. Francisco GINER DE LOS RIOS is

another exiled poet. BERNARDO CLARIANA, a Valentian, the youngest professor of Latin in Spain at the age of 20, Bachelor of Philosophy and Letters, went to the U.S. after some time spent in Cuba, and published a book of poems which Dudley Fitts has translated as *Rendez-Vous with Spain* (New York).

MAX AUB is one of the leading Spanish intellectuals in Mexico. After many terrible months in the Algerian concentration camp of Djelfa he left Europe (1943) and has settled in Mexico City, where he has written some ten works—poems, plays, novels, besides many film-scripts. He it was who, as film-technician, helped Malraux make that wonderful picture of the Spanish war from Malraux's novel *Days of Hope*, in 1938, while Malraux was still pro-Republican. Here are lines from one of Aub's vivid poems in the book he wrote and smuggled out of camp, the book that is just called *Djelfa*:

SPAIN—PROMETHEUS
Night,
World of silver,
Passes—
Upon whose shoulders?
Africa, black and pard,
Andalucia, green and white
Spain,
Coming and going
On the sea's shoulders,
Blue of its silver,
Green of its nickel.
Spain drawn up
On shoulders of thirst
From oceans by continents,
America, Africa—
Well set about
With palms to adorn you.
Spain: my thirst
Tied to the Pyrenees,
New Saint Sebastian
Pierced with arrows—
Blood in Vera,
Blood in Jaca,
Blood in Puigcerda.

And the same, mixed with lime and water;
Granada, silver,
Red within,
Gilded without—

Spain, mirror of my faith:
I that am I, I that am that other . . .
Spain, Prometheus
Of Europe, enchained
To the Pyrenees.
The chains run into you
From Guadiana,
Wounded by water,
Blood of the Ebro,
Blood of the Douro,
Spain bled white
From Tagus to Tajo.
Spain enchained
To the Pyrenees;
Spain, Prometheus,
Mirror of my thirst.

Night,
World of silver,
Moon like a prisoner
Pauses and passes
On the shoulders of whom?

Spain,
Distant land.

(2/5/42—Djelfa)

Famous, in a different way and on a different plane, is LEON FELIPE, the translator of Walt Whitman, Professor in Panama City, who hurried back to Spain when the Republic was attacked. His inspiration has many affinities with the tenets of Anarchism. Now travelling and lecturing in many of the Latin American countries, he has published *El Haca, El Español del Exodo y del Llanto.* Characteristic of him is a stark sincerity and a dynamic surge in word and image, the broad stroke on the large scale; an interesting, "prophet-like" force.

In contrast stands LUIS CERNUDA, whose line is of great purity, author of *Perfil del Aire, La Invitacion a la Poesia, Donde habita un*

Olvido. Much of his work has been published in José Bergamin's *Cruz y Raya.* JOSE BERGAMIN, himself a writer of international repute, started publishing on arrival in Mexico; his fine *Ediciones Seneca* carry on although Bergamin himself has gone to found another firm in Brazil.

RAMON SENDER is also in exile, at present in the U.S.A. There are some deep differences between him and these others, though he shares their antifascism. Sender is well-known in England, thanks to the translations by Sir Peter Chalmers Mitchell. He was in the Republican Army from the outset and his *War in Spain* is one of his best works. The preface to the Cenit reprint of his *O.P.* says: "The two books of his we have already published, *The Religious Problem in Mexico and Iman* reveal him as a writer aware of the responsibility he has taken on while speaking to men of their problems, giving them a direction to follow. In *Iman* his terrific fidelity of description shows inexorably how unsanctioned must ever remain the crime of the Spanish War on the Riff." *Iman* is indeed a hallucinating description of the Spanish Moroccan war. While *Orden Publico* is a bitter, witty, poetic and trenchant description of life in a Spanish jail. His latest book shows a reversion to a sort of anarcho-mysticism.

It is impossible to write here of the many other Spanish authors in Mexico. And equally impossible not to mention the three men who have been the ablest friends of the Spanish Republicans:

PABLO NERUDA, the great Chilian poet, who gave freedom and a new life to 2,800 exiles by having them brought to Chile on the "Winnipeg" just one month before the start of World War Two, and who is more connected with Spain than any other living non-Spanish writer—indeed he is often considered to all intents and purposes one of the greatest living *Spanish* poets—while Chilian Consul for years in Madrid and during the first part of the war.

JOSE MANCISIDOR, Mexican writer of great renown and personal friend of President Miguel Aleman and one-time Director of Secondary Education in Mexico City, who founded FOARE, the Mexican "Aid to Republican Spain" Organization. And JUAN MARINELLO, leading writer and educationalist of Cuba.

Then there is the Cuban poet NICOLAS GUILLEN—and indeed so many others that I cannot even begin the list.

In France are the poets JOSE MARIA QUIROGA I PLA, ARTURO

SERRANO PLAJA, and JUAN MIGUEL ROMA. Not all of the intellectuals actually wanted to leave Europe, and QUIROGA is one who felt this way. He was therefore in great danger throughout the occupation of France, having held important posts during the Spanish war. His book of Sonnets has fine quality, yet *Morir al Dia*, as it is called, has nothing, I think, finer than a recent poem of his, of which these are a few lines:

SPAIN IN ITS RIGHTFUL PLACE

You are no painted lie, mother of men,
to need bedizening praise, to need the shout
of touting violence: the world can see you
plainly through the pain of prisonwalls
(extreme hunger and thirst—bread and justice)
and set its tribute on your noble brow
a wreath O mother nailed upon the cross,
you tree of glory with a fruit of heroes.
No, the free peoples of the world have learned
the place you truly hold among them all,
not a superior or a lesser place,
but on the same good height and with the same
aspiring ardour as that which drives the world
to strive and grapple with the present need,
to move towards a dawn of faith and labour,
of clear-eyed life and peace without an end.

The poet's answer to the Falangist slogan: Arriba España.

ARTURO SERRANO PLAJA was another of the soldier poets who came into France with the last combatants. He was soon out of the concentration camp thanks to Aragon, Bloch and Jean Cassou, with his wife, Claude, daughter of Jean Richard Bloch. Later he worked with Alberti in the Argentine, publishing poems and the stories called *Les Decombres du Ciel*, and a novel, *Don Manuel de Leon*, besides criticism, essays on the Escorial, and a study on the Spanish painter M. A. Ortiz. His *Chant à la Liberté* came out in Algiers in 1943. Now, back in France, he contributes poetry and criticism to French reviews and has published a revised edition of his *El Hombre y el Trabajo*. The lines that follow here are from a new poem of his, *La Cita—The Tryst*.

These are not hours or days: instead, a mob
of squalid spectral weeks
that grow to herds and mass to tangled years.
These are the sluggish centuries, the beasts
bred in the caverns of crepuscular bone,
myths of prenatal memories,
a grain of sand stuck in the destiny
of clockless time, of time without an hourglass,
time that for me protracts his pilgrimage.
And then this love that twines around the chain
I suffer as my people: as all Spain
the rope that binds and tortures her. I ask:
Am I myself awaited there
Or is it I who wait?

If in Spain today science, art, letters have reached an unprecedented pitch of decadence, there is another Spain, in which intellectual activity goes on—in clandestinity. Witness is the (secret) *Union de los Intelectuales Libres* (the U.I.L.). Its more than 2,000 members include men of science, artists, writers of many kinds. It publishes a central organ *Demócrito* and also *Nuevo Renacimiento* and *Nuestros Tiempos*—all, of course, illegally. Its influence spreads through all of the different provinces, where the cultural programme of Spanish Resistance and a literary-social manifesto have been published and distributed by the U.I.L. during the last two years. Its active force is feared by the Francoists.

Guerrilleros are best organized in Levante, Aragon, Andalusia, Galicia, Asturias and the Centre, that is, almost all of Spain. A *literature guerrillera* exists—in the form of songs and ballads, satyrical pieces and verses, political anecdotes and news of the struggle. Many are the illegally printed sheets and even reviews, that of the 4th Corps of Guerrilleros of Galicia (*El Guerrillero*) being the best-known. Manuel Ponte was the leader of this IV Agrupacion and was killed in battle with the Falange in 1946. This verse was made to him by no one knows who; the martial ring and feeling in it are a sort of legacy to his successor . . .

Heroic death—in battle met—
Of him who died contentiously
Calls for a triumphant march
Rather than for an elegy.

If the *Romancero de la Guerra Civil* (1936-39) was a large collection of poems in traditional forms, the work of well known poets such as Emilio Prados, Altolaguirre, Alberti, Garfias, Arconada and others, the *Romances* of the present struggle are generally anonymous. These spontaneous verses, full of fresh and militant beauty, are like the Guerrilleros themselves: they are suddenly *there* and no one knows whence they have come.

Typical of a *romance* of this kind is the *Dream of the Traitor Franco* written by JUAN MIGUEL ROMA, published in his *Romances de Sombra y Fuego* in 1947. In it Franco falls asleep in his Moor-guarded Palacio del Pardo in Madrid, awaiting orders from Hitler and Mussolini. The dream that comes is a man whom he has had executed who seizes him by the arm and leads him to the window from which he looks out onto the people building a gallows on which to hang him.

The literature inspired by Spanish Resistance comprises so much, split up as it is into, (1) what is written clandestinely in Spain, and (2) has been written since 1939 in exile, that it is impossible to list more than a few works here: the novel by HERRERA PETERE, *Heights of Extremadura;* the two plays by JOSE BERGAMIN, *The Daughter of God* and *The Girl Guerrillera;* plays, stories, poems by CESAR ARCONADA; several theatrical works by MAX AUB; poems by PEDRO GARFIAS, ANTONIO APARICIO, JUAN REJANO, ARTURO SERRANO PLAJA, LORENZO VARELA, and, of course, many more. The spirit that invests them all is: "Spain is not dead. Fight on. Compromise with Franco and Fascism is for ever impossible." In Bergamin's plays, the tragic quality, the intensity of action and the large role given to the Chorus suggest affinities with the tragedies of antiquity.

Several of these poets have written of the fraternity between the U.S.S.R. and the cause of Republican Spain. ARCONADA'S poem *Answer to Mijail Svetlov* tells of a fighter from Granada who fell in the battle of the Ukraine; his long poem, *Dolores,* is addressed to Pasionaria, whose son was killed fighting at Stalingrad. In these poems and in those of PETERE (*Agustin Zoroa*), in APARICIO'S *España Vive,* and in IZCARAY'S historical novel *Casto Garcia Roza,* the heroes are people of the Spanish resistance. Militancy of spirit, vigour, no half-tones or inhibitions are characteristic of all. A nucleus, a vanguard of Spanish Communist writers exists: Arconada, Garfias, Aparicio, Petere, Rejano, Wenceslao Roces and

others. A vanguard—as the Communist "Mundo Obrero" and "Nuestra Bandera" are the vanguard of the many anti-fascist Spanish papers not only outside, but, clandestinely, inside Spain.

CESAR ARCONADA is a leading Communist intellectual; his novel *Reparte de Tierras* explaining the reason why the Spanish peasants began to take over the land and work it themselves because of the non-application of the new agrarian laws promised by the Republic established him years ago as a fine writer on social questions. He is now in the Soviet Union, where he edited the Spanish section of *International Literature* for years. He is also a sensitive poet. ("Vivimos en unz Noche Oscuza.")

Frequently talks and lectures on cultural Spanish themes take place in Mexico, in other Latin American Republics and in Paris. It was Professor WENCESLAO ROCES who voiced an outstanding truth: that Spanish intellectuals in exile are taking a militant line in the battle against reaction not only in Spain but everywhere. At the Congress of Wroclaw in August 1948, anti-fascist Spain was represented by two non-party and two Communist intellectuals, whose common point of view was made clear: Here, DR. GIRAL, one of the delegates, said: "The defense of culture and of the Republican cause are obviously inseparable. He who turns from the problems of the people is not only being absurd but a traitor. The intellectual is bound to defend the culture of the intellect, but, at the same time to feel concern for the problems of the people of his country." Perhaps it is JUAN MIGUEL ROMA who has sung most of the Guerrileros and the force of the struggle within Spain today. Living in Perpignan as he does, he is in touch with the many who come out of Spain *por el monte* as the escape over the Pyrenees is called. This inspiration has the authentic ring of facts and his poetry a quality of flames in the wind, it is "fougueux et intempestif," like these lines from a recent poem of his:

"THE VOICE AND BLOOD OF SPAIN THAT COME TO US"

There is a force in Spain since Spain was an hour, a minute old, and even back of that,
And a hot wind rises like dust going up in flames
At the crossroads, bearing down on the bodies that would oppose it in battle;

They fall like light, pierced through with shot—
A hot wind of madness, delirium,
That has forgotten all laws and knows no master.
It has dried up the blood that rose with the desire
Of being a round stone that's forever rolling,
It tears like silk the heroic standards of battle . . .
And the force, the drive of it, goes on.
A law, gravitating on its own weight,
Bestrides an axis of light and opaque shadow;
Above this light are names clear as day:
Cristino, Via, Rozas,
Sanchez Biedma, Ugarte,
Llerandi, Ysasa, Ponte,
Segundo Vilaboy,
Zoroa, Nuño, and as many more as have with Manuela Sanchez
Engraven their names—and Julian Caballero.
Names innumerable
Of those that fell, that fall and will yet fall
Clasping the whole of death in heroic arms,
An infinite legion.
Above the shadow is nothing,
A death without echo, a phantasm
Rising out of itself in a mirror plastered with blood;
That which dominates this wind
Goes by the name of Spain,
And the wind bends already under the weight of this golden blood.
Behold them!
Driving erect to the assault of the towns go our heroes,
With the wind urging them on.
Listen how it bears their voices to us like a sheaf of wheat-ears,
Mark this voice which today is that of the wind,
It comes from the Guerrilleros of Aragon and Levante,
Calling to us yesterday, today and tomorrow.

Juan-Miguel Roma, born in Jalon, Alicante, who is a teacher by profession, should not, at the age of 35, be working now as a brick-mason, now as a carpenter, now as a fruit-packer. He should be teaching Spanish and Spanish letters in a French college. Roma travelled much throughout Spain, on foot and on horse, and has a superb fund of "folklore" of that perennial marvel: the Spanish peasantry. One of the soldier-poets, his work was published by

Altolaguirre in the famous *Granada de las Letras y de las Armas* produced by the soldiers of the Eastern Front in Spain. In exile he has published *Romances de Sombra y Fuego, 3 Poemas* and is preparing a three-volume book, *De Oscura Trasparencia,* partly made up of Sonnets. What Roma says is true of the feeling of many of the Spanish intellectuals: "I believe that poetry should be a witness of the poet and of his time, just as the poet should be a witness to himself." And that the wish and duty of the exiled are their immediate return to Spain as soon as Franco's regime is overthrown. Meanwhile he has gathered sufficient poems for an Anthology called *España Herida.*

Let me end this "report" with some of the lines that struck me in the poems of these Spaniards. Sometimes it is a lapidary phrase like MAX AUB'S "Spain, mirror of my faith." Sometimes it is an image or motif that soars up out of the orchestra of sorrow, like this one from CONCHA MENDEZ, *Happy art thou who wearest thus so high thy crown of thorns.*
And sometimes it's a phrase with the dignity and truth of philosophy, and with poetic truth as well, as when ANTONIO MACHADO said of his people: "Un pueblo es siempre una empresa futura." A people is for ever the task, (the symbol and enterprise) of the future. And those words evoke the full meaning of Max Aub's "Spain, mirror of my faith." Allow me, Spanish poets, to add here: "And of ours, who are your friends."

Charles Duff

SPANISH POETS IN EXILE

The problems of publication and distribution which have faced the widely dispersed Spanish Republican poets in exile, considering the volume and quality of their work, make one regret that somebody has not established for them a sort of "Poetry

Clearing-House." Wherever there are exiled Spaniards, the poetic impulse is not lacking—in itself a testimony to Iberian resilience. But it must not be forgotten that whoever would attempt to render them justice—and those who deserve such attention must number at least three score—is severely handicapped by the difficulty of finding texts outside a few anthologies and such volumes as may have been sent by friends to friends or by the poets themselves. The works written by them in exile have been published in Mexico, Argentina, Chile and other Latin American countries, a few in the U.S., and still fewer in France (according to where the poets happen to be living). This factor must be allowed for in the remarks which follow.

In turning the pages of such texts as are available, the English reader may find himself wondering whether it would be a libel on our own contemporary poets to say that the Spaniards show what, for want of a better term, may be called more "spirit." The contrast between most of our contemporary poetry and that of the Spanish exiles is striking. One cannot read a page of the Spanish without feeling that, in the lines and behind them, there is a more intense and passionate living of life, and, if there is not always a deeper awareness, there is always a clearer vision. The Spaniard is unconscious of inhibitions which might restrict the expression of either greater joy or greater sorrow, greater sweetness or greater bitterness. When he says "Yes" or "No" about something he says it with all the art and the strength of which he is capable. When half-tones appear, they are deliberately conceived as such, not there because the poet's mind has lapsed into confusion.

For reasons which need not be discussed her, the Spaniards of this age—especially those driven from their land—have turned to poetry as something more than a solace. This XXth century, from the generation of '98 with Unamuno as the outstanding figure, has seen a renaissance in Spanish poetry—one nobly marked by Federico Garcia Lorca, Rafael Alberti and Jorge Guillén. These names (with the addition of that of Juan Ramon Gimenez) are the four cardinal points of the Spanish poets in exile—excepting Lorca they are poets in exile, and if Federico had not been executed by Franco he would be with them, as was the great Antonio Machado for the brief moment before he too succumbed to the miseries inflicted on him by the enemies of the people. The poets in exile are still poets of the people, and among them are the

greatest names in contemporary Spanish poetry. Not without significance is the fact that in a recent, and certainly the best, anthology published *in* Spain under Church and Falangist authority, (*Poesia Española Actual*, Editoria Nacional, Madrid, 1946), the eminent Francoist editor found it impossible to ignore these poets of the people; among the names of favoured nonentities we find a leavening of Republican poets now outside of Spain, including such outstanding ones as Rafael Alberti, Jorge Guillen, Juan Ramon Jimenez, Damaso Alonso, Manuel Altolaguirre, Luis Cernuda, Pedro Salinas—not to mention the murdered Garcia Lorca, and Manuel Machado who, until his death, was *doyen* of the Republican poets in exile. The editor salves his conscience with little notes here and there—for example, he records that Rafael Alberti, after a certain date "Placed his work at the service of the Communist Revolution."

This generation of poets in exile has lived *inside* the Spanish social struggle. One feels in their work the consciousness of that inner experience and a pride in its authenticity as a part of their poetic being. With it is the ever-present "tragic sense of life" of which Unamuno wrote, a respect for traditional forms, and a stark absence of sentimentality. Sentiment there is in abundance; sentimentality— never. It is invigorating to know that we have in the modern phase of Spanish poetry (so well represented in the works of the exiles) something we have not experienced in our own poetry since the Elizabethans—a vigour and a fertility which Spain herself has not known since her Golden Age. Some of its outstanding general characteristics have been noted above here. Let us now glance at the works of two poets who have up till now escaped notice in England: José Maria Quiroga i Plá and Arturo Serrano Plaja.

It is not always easy to extract the full value from one of Quiroga's sonnets at a single reading, because the musical grace of his language is often so superlative that one is at first gripped by it at the cost of the meaning, for which one must return. Yet the meaning is never obscure, and he never fails to convey the mood or the atmosphere. In *Morir al Dia* (Ed. Ragasol, Paris, 1946), there are no less than 150 sonnets, beginning with one written in Barcelona in April, 1938 and ending with one written in September, 1945 in Paris, where the author now lives. Quiroga Plá proves that to write poetry the difficult form need not be

avoided; with him it is a case of the sonnet being the man. He writes in the tradition of Garcilaso, Góngora, Lope and Quevedo, which was maintained by Unamuno, Machado, Lorca, and is practised by Juan Ramon, Jimenez, Alberti and Guillén. These others may have written greater sonnets, but none of them moves with finer ease. He carries the form with him as if it did not exist till he conceived it.

Gardens within earth-walls, wherein the tower
Is like yet one more tree and sets its shade
On the enclosure through whose heart there glides
A freshet sound of vespertinal water.

The thought of Quiroga Plá is that of the sensitive, deep-hearted man whose sensitiveness and humanity are a part of his virility—a virility which here and there shows itself in the Stoicism which may almost be called a Spanish characteristic.

In September, 1938, Antonio Machado wrote about Serrano Plaja's book of verse, *El Hombre y el Trabajo,* which was published in Barcelona during the Spanish war. "It is," says Machado, "totally impregnated with the war, for the author was a soldier-poet or a poet-soldier and 'up to his neck in the struggle'." Serrano Plaja now lives in Paris. The poems with a French translation by Emmanuel Robles facing them, have been republished in Paris (Editions Charlot, 1947). His later work differs from this in many ways, but man and poet are well represented here. Serrano Plaja sings of man in activity, of man the worker, man the soldier, man facing life and man facing death. The verse is free and thought dominates the form. It is exhilarating to read these pages, and before long the reader feels himself to be a part of the creative activity and anxious to further it. He is direct, economical and vigorous from his simple beginning:

These are the kinds of work,
And this the voice of the workers.
The law of labour and citizen,
The token of the bread,
The rising of the sun and the weariness of sweat,
And the figures of hunger and of the people.

The reader is carried on, and one is somehow reminded of the fine sweep of *Os Luisadas,* though the activities sung by Serrano

Plaja have a different content and different social implications. Here again we find that quality of "greater spirit" which characterizes the modern Spanish Republican poets. It is to be hoped that the availability of a French translation will encourage one of our poets to put *El Hombre y el Trabajo* in English. We have nothing like it. And Quiroga's beautiful sonnets, difficult as the task would be, should certainly be attempted in an English rendering.

An Anthology, *Poetas en el Destierro* (*Poets in Exile*) has been published by Cruz del Sur Edns. Santiago, Chile. It contains a selection of the best work by Antonio Machado, J. R. Jimenez, Leon Felipe, Moreno Villa, Salinas, Guillén, Larrea, Prados, Alberti, Cernuda and Altolaguirre. Some of the poems have not been published elsewhere, although selections have appeared in Argentina, Mexico, Colombia. The most important point for English readers to remember is that, in the works of these Spanish poets in exile, there is poetry of a *quality, range and quantity* which it is hard to parallel in the world today.

Melpo Axioti

HOW MANY LOVES ARE QUENCHT

MARCH HAD COME. IT WAS A DAY TO BE REMEMbered. The evening before, everyone had gone to sleep alone, and next day they found themselves reunited. It was a demonstration. The first. The men came back in small groups, the way they go to mass. Where did they come from, how had they been brought back? nobody knew. Swords, horses and cannon were heaped up at the street-corners. Shops were shut, not by government order, but by decision of the shophands. Not a flag in the city. Polyxena looked up at the sky, the clouds and this moving crowd, all along the street. She was drawn out like an accordion, and, at moments, a blot of colour made her like a field of flowers, or dahlias in a shopwindow. The first shots broke out. Then a group detached

itself from the mass and began running. Leaflets went whirling like a flurry of autumn leaves. The first sunbeam of the year lighted up a flag. A flag that was running, yes a flag. Everyone stared at the hand that held it. It lacked two fingers. Someone murmured, "The exiles, the exiles are come back." Polyxena ran with the others. She saw the flag, the missing fingers. It was Emile. The shots increased. "The exiles, the exiles," said someone again beside her. At the sight of Emile and of the bodies tumbling down to the earth, her gaze was filled with fear and joy together. They passed at that moment by a cakeshop that once had the smell of vanilla. Now the smell of blood.

They picked up the first ones who fell dead. Unknown persons bandaged the wounds of the wounded. Even the invalids were running. Even the lame. They even went limping in the same way, in the same rhythm, swept along by the flood. And all were there, all those whom she had known, those from the hovels and the distant suburbs, those who had fought in the war, and who, now, were the soul of this demonstration, those who for a long time had had accounts to settle, those who had murdered fathers to avenge, and kids without breeches, and students without schools, and young girls with tender hearts. And Emile, her great love, was there, in the front rank, weighed down under his flag and always standing up straight.

The shooting was now in volleys. The men cried something that sounded like *Liberty* and dispersed. Polyxena got away by twisting little streets. The streets were her friends that day, the passers-by, her brothers. The gates of the Morgue made a grinding noise again to let some bodies in. The first dead of the Resistance. The others, those who had starved to death. A new series was beginning.

The demonstration dispersed. The people went off, but without wholly separating. They did not get lost as before at these public obsequies where you'd have thought yourself in the theatre, after the rise of the curtain. Now, they were linked by invisible but powerful threads. How many, at the same hour . . . in different places . . . in other countries . . .

She had almost reached home, on that warm day, the first warm day of the year, when she met a large General who was walking his three dogs out. They were marching, he in front, they behind. And her eyes, filled with glory and death, saw for the first time the ditch which separated her from her enemies. . . . Now, lying

on her back, in prison, with her arm broken, she was thinking: How many years have slipped by since then. And still the ditch doesn't fill up. No, it always grows deeper. Blood cuts apart for ever.

That same day Emile came to see her. At the falling of the night. She hardly recognized him. In the morning, at a distance, he had looked better. He was changed. Several of his teeth were missing. Why?

"Shut the door carefully," he said. She hadn't seen him for three years. "You are still my wife, aren't you?"

"O, yes, yes," she said.

"I got away. Some of the islands were left without guards in the distraction of the first days. The deportation islands, that no one remembers, not even God. Rocks in one part, pebbles in another. Volcanos spitting lava, roadways hacked with an axe. The comrades got faint with lack of food, they wasted on slow fires, we cut our cigarettes into four, mother's milk dried up and we used to feed babies on nettles. Old people of seventy, skeletons, tuberculosis, rags. But unbroken. For them, no compromise. We've slipped off in boats, at the oar, with the thews of our arms, buried in the holds of launches, sewn up in sacks, sunk deep in grain, fighting the waves. We will never give up. We will bring Greece back to life. Some have got away, the others have been handed over to the enemy. We'll all of us do what has to be done, we are the future."

How they loved. Three years already. As if it were the first time again. He was wounded. A bullet. It had gone through both him and his flag. But he had not let the flag fall.

"I'm proud of you, you've kept your word," he told her. He took her in his arms. His wound bled and the dressing grew red. He lay down, exhausted, in her arms, and stayed there till the dawn. It all happened just as in a story. Even when it was all over, it could never be forgotten.

Yes, I've held him close, now Polyxena thought.

"And if need be you'll swear it, to the very point of death."

I swear it, I told him. It was the day when I became a woman. But it's not the oath I swore that's brought me here. To prison. I am here because I understand. I wanted to stay.

Not long after the loudspeaker which the underground used to hand news on, was heard. "Listen . . . listen . . ." What was there

strange in it, that dialogue of night and shadows. Pulses beat faster, hearts grew warmer, windows opened, and the whole city shuddered like the leaves of a tree on a heath when the rain has just struck it. "Listen . . . listen . . ." Polyxena smiled. And if she were to cry it out aloud, what would happen to her? The one-handed man would come rushing up, the foreign hangman, woken up before his time, and behind him would come his orderly, the Greek. Death would strike her a few hours sooner. She crossed her hands on her bosom, her broken arm clicked. She heard it in the night like a banging door.

Then the weather changed with the season. Fruits no longer rotted on the boughs. They were gathered. People didn't die of hunger in the streets, but of something else. The beggars had vanished, they'd gone into the struggle, and only a priest in a torn soutane whined out still in the Kolonaki quarter, "Charity, please."

Men slipped out, at night, from their houses, and repeated to one another, "You're still thinking? No need to think to do this job of work. Now all a man needs is a bit of spirit. I swear," they said, "to fight till the last drop of my blood." And with this oath they fired their first shots.

"Tonight the eastern quarters have fought their first battle." It was like a first communiqué, all the terms of which Polyxena now recalled. And those eastern quarters, I won't ever see them again: our homes . . . our gardenwalls . . .

There it was, in those houses too small even to bring the bedding out into the sun, that the fighters were swarming. Behind their window-curtains, how many mysteries, how many secrets in the packets that came out of them to be scattered about the nights of Athens. Those nights with agony in them to the extent that they were empty. Through how many unknown streets had she scampered. "Stone, little stone," Kostas used to say, "how many times in a day have I walked aloft over you, like a Saint John's fire." And he bent down to caress the pavement.

Those isolated houses, which had once perhaps been butchers' or draper's shops, now served as stores for arms. On the threshold you saw women who seemed to have no care in the world, who plied their needlework and hid behind them the powder and the soldiers. And the walls, after a fight, spoke of blood, hope, courage.

On the last Christmas there was a reunion at the chandler's

house. Suddenly someone said to us, "Comrades, we need some plates and pots to send the partisans."

Alecos leant over and said to me in a low voice, "I for one can't bring any, we haven't any crockery at all at our place, we eat out of newsprint."

Then an old woman came in. "Give me something, comrades, for burying Manolis. He's dead."

"Don't do it," said someone, "that's the best way to get cleaned up—by charity. Until victory."

And who was this Manolis? nobody had ever seen him.

Night came down and we heard the radio shouting some way off. Alexos said, "Don't be afraid. Those are words, fascist words; but however terrible they are, one day they'll all go, while we'll stay, we will, for we know what's what."

Then, the man in charge ended the session by saying, "Get round to your pals about rubbing out all the advertisements along the streets. The Gabardine King, the Baron of Bobbins, and Rupture Trusses . . . We don't need em'. It's along those walls they're shooting down our children, and we must keep the marks."

Yes, they were being shot down. On the pavement, stuck against the wall, in the ravines, tied fast to trees that were set on fire, with their bowels torn out and thrown to dogs. Their shoes were taken away, and they died with bare feet. Those anonymous carcasses, they were the bodies of those that had been seen in the war, then hidden away in the alleys. They lay there, in the way, washed with rain.

Polyxena remembered Kostas. Alone against the wall. With bound fists, with bare feet. Five gun-muzzles levelled at him. A look so calm you'd have thought it made of glass. One word, "I deny," and he could have bought his life. Nobody would have heard him, but he didn't say it. And of this tragedy there remained only a photograph.

All were like that, thought Polyxena. Was it for nothing? Was it, as the saying goes, a *gratuitous act*? No, it was a duty. We have achieved it. And we are dead before the hour. In a few years, beyond the least doubt, all will be completed. We, we won't be there any longer, we are born today. We die as others have died of cholera before the discovery of the serum. We have been the guineapigs. Accept us, Lord, receive our souls . . .

Polyxena began to laugh. Where will he receive us? she thought.

In the drawing-room? Receive the souls which go towards you . . .

She remembers it the way the priest of Hymettus used to say it to her. She had found herself in his house some months before.

"Don't give me away, my daughter," he said to her, "I'd be up against it, I put my trust in you."

"It was a Sunday. I came back from mass and I'd taken off my soutane. We were sitting down in this very place. My wife lighted up. The children were playing when someone knocked on the yard-door. I went out. It was a young man. 'Save me, father, I'm being hunted, I put myself in your hands.' I said to him, 'Get up then quick, go across the terrace, keep to the right, jump into the enclosure. But make sure you remember: to the right.' I had hardly got back when a German came in with two Greeks. They asked me, 'Where have you hidden him?' 'Brothers, I've seen nothing, I've been in the house.' They began to rummage round and ran to the terrace. Myself, I was sure the chap had got away. Then we heard yells, 'Hands up, you dog!' 'I won't!' And a rifle-shot. He was the one who fired. He had committed suicide. In his hurry he'd mistaken the direction and was caught up on the close-wall. He couldn't get out. My wife and children were shivering. The German stuck his revolver against my chest, and the Greeks pulled theirs out. 'Wait a moment,' I said to them. I put on the soutane I'd just taken off, took the crucifix and knelt down with my wife and my four children. I lifted up the cross and began the prayer, Our Lord Jesus Christ, father of all orphans and persecuted, six souls deliver themselves up to you, this evening. Receive them, Lord, Lord . . . The German was the first to lower his arm. They went off and left us like that. We were saved. We buried the dead man at dawn next day."

She recalled this thickset almost-beardless priest, and Athens nights deep with their mystery.

Ah, the dormer-window, day was coming. The dialplate had changed colour. She suddenly felt cold, and pulled the cover up. "George, help me, my George." A woman was dreaming. Perhaps she loves him, thought Polyxena. If love could save from death, nobody would die tomorrow. This time, the end is near. Quick, the events of these last few days. All Greece was astir. She had left it rearing like a restive horse. She had seen her love, Emile, off to the mountains. He had no cloak. Where is he now? Where will he be when he hears the news. Who will say to him, "Emile, tonight

your wife's no longer living . . ." That night she didn't sleep at her own home. Daylight was still delaying when all of a sudden they heard, "Quick, quick, hide yourselves, chaps." Nobody had time.

In that halfdarkness nothing could be made out. "Get rid of things," someone was calling out, "we're surrounded."

The women went out to see and were struck with bayonets. Children were torn from their fathers. Men were dragged off by their feet and their hair. In the penumbra you could not make faces out, you heard only groans. All our men were kept on their knees till day. The others were around in thousands. When the first rays of the sun showed up, a police-spy was brought along, his head covered with a black hood. Only his eyes could be seen. With his finger he pointed out the "guilty."

O, from that moment I'd never be able to see a carnival mask without a shudder, said Polyxena to herself, I'd always think of that man.

The hood moved on and made denunciations all the while. The machineguns came into action. Blood spurted about. Those who remained were led off, and went towards the west, with the sun. Nobody ever saw them again, they went over the border and were lost in Europe. The mothers went running in the rear; and those who had succeeded in escaping hid among their skirts, inside barrels, wherever they could.

O never again without trembling will I be able to see a police-cap or to run after a man in the street, said Polyxena to herself, I'll always think of this scene.

When they'd gone, flames broke out. They'd set things on fire. It was the last straw. Women and children rushed out with bowls, trying to put the fire out. And when she saw the red flame like a snake coil out from her door an old woman pulled up her skirts and began to run. And the others called out to her, "You're going off, mother Assimina . . . Don't go, save your house."

Another stood facing her door, pointing out her home, and said, "My children, now smoke is eating through the roof. My husband took five years in making this dream come true . . . a home . . . now our little roundtable is being burned away . . ." "Shut up," someone said to console her, "look there, Mersina's little girl has been burned alive and you're weeping for dead things."

The flames died away only when everything had been consumed.

Then the old folk gathered on the square and drew up the balance-sheet. "On this day sorrow came up with the sun. We have lost our sons. A hundred and four sheds have been destroyed with their hens, with their chickens too. A tongue of fire has given them a lick and burned them all away; and us too, who'd laboured ourselves sore here for a quarter of a century. May the plague fall on those who have done all this."

Throughout the rest of the day the women were like mad things. Polyxena wept, not knowing what to say to them. She had lost nothing, and she was almost ashamed of it. She went into a low room where some women had come together.

"Barricade the doors, don't let them come back," said one of the mothers.

"And if they come, what can they find now? There are no more men among us, they have swept with a clean broom."

"Ah," sighed another, "our dead go away now all on their own, nobody goes with them, not a priest nor a crucifix."

"All these long years you've nursed him, and many a white sleepless night he's given you, and it's only taken a moment to snatch him away. Where can we wake for him now? where can we light a wax candle for him? where can we find his grave?"

"You gave him bread and you gave him courage too, and sometimes you had nothing, neither in the kneading-trough nor in your heart."

"Once misfortune was hidden above all from mothers. A blind man wouldn't have known that grief had struck the house. But now we all weep together and rend the air with our laments."

"Today neither death nor fear are hidden. Folk don't put on gloves any more to tell you that your son is in custody, and you know all that that means."

Suddenly the door brusquely opened and a dishevelled woman came in. She showed her bloody palms and broke into lamenting cries, "Here is the blood of my Alekos. I've gathered it up mixed with dirt from the place where he's fallen, and I want to live on it." She licked her hands. Then all the women fell on their knees and said prayers.

It had become dangerous for Polyxena to stay a night more in this area of murderous repression. As soon as darkness came, she went away, with the man who had taken her there. She went towards her own place, making a wide detour to avoid all mistakes.

They coasted round the Palace and came to the rich quarter of Kolonaki. An absolute calm reigned there.

There, at the top of the square, a voice was saying, "Heracles." Far off the sound of shots was heard. "Heracles." The bullets whistled in the distance. "Heracles, the pot." Only this voice made a hole in the hush.

"This tucked-away part has no soul," said the man.

"No, it hasn't," she replied.

"Nothing to be surprised at in that. Some metals keep heat, others don't. Some people have a heart, others keep a lump of ice in its place."

Polyxena smiled.

He said to her, "Why are you laughing? Here it is they cook up the intrigues with the German women who wormed in among us before the war; here it is that the new love-affairs of the S.S. officers are hatched."

"Keep quiet," said Polyxena, "do you want us to be heard?"

He then said in a lower voice, "From this spot came those who picked out the Cretan prisoners to work in slave-gangs constructing roads for the enemy. They had them lugged out of jail and packed off as far as Macedonia. It's a den of traitors, this place."

"Keep quiet," she repeated, "how terrible the night is."

He said in a yet more gentle voice, "Here it is that they keep asking the question: Do you think we'll be punished for not having taken part in the Resistance? And the reply always is: We must wait for the end of the war. Then we'll see what will happen to those who haven't taken a definite stand. We'll know what to do next time."

"Here now," said Polyxena with a smile, "I've reached home."

"Then, tomorrow, at three o'clock, have a good sleep tonight. Tomorrow we've a lot on our plate."

She made out in the shadow some papers scattered on the ground. She bent and picked one up. They were banknotes.

They lie about in the gutter, she thought. I've known the time when I was small and a ha'penny was enough to buy a stick of barleysugar. Tuesday, Friday, Saturday, I used to take some for the orphans. Now the children play about with millions, and we find them in the mud. What a road we've run, and how confounded are all values.

No sooner had she gone in than her father said to her, "Take

care, my child . . . I was worried." That was the first time he'd said it to her; he didn't want to frighten her. But his words didn't help. She was arrested that night.

When they took her off, her father closed his eyes.

Who had carried away the sack she'd kept in the cellar? she knew that someone must have hidden it; what her father did afterwards, what happened about her rendezvous at three o'clock next day, she never knew. In the first police station where the Greeks broke her arm, she saw on her entry a young woman on the edge of death, lying on the ground, with her hands tied behind her back, eaten up with fleabites. In the second police station, where the soldiers took her, she saw another woman, wounded with a knifeblow in the throat, who wasn't even able to groan, who made little miaows like a newborn cat. The soldiers kicked her as they went by. She was still there when Polyxena left.

At last, in this very place, in Haidari Camp, she came on a prisoner kneeling on a bundle. She couldn't distinguish her features. But when the woman rose and said, "The baby's dead inside its little wrap," Polyxena saw her face. It was Marion.

God, she too. How many years had passed. But so it was. What tracks had she followed to reach this spot? She made a movement to cover herself up, but they couldn't exchange a word, already she was being led off for the interrogation.

"Then you refuse to sign?" a Greek said to her.

"I won't sign," said Polyxena.

"You don't want to leave here?"

"No, I don't want to leave here. I want to stay, with the others." She remembered how she had said to that old Salome, at the start of it all.

"Then I'll kill you," said the Greek.

"That won't get you anywhere, it won't change anything . . ."

"Take her in," he shouted.

When she opened her eyes once more—she had been beaten again on her broken arm—she thought all of a sudden, it is false to say when one has suffered too much that one is tired of life. The price one has paid is so big. One loves life all the more.

But now, daylight had come. The jest was over. With the night's end this stitched-up book, the story of a woman, remained unfinished. The door gratingly opened. Polyxena took up the mirror

at her side. Her hair had gone white as snow, quite white in a single night.

The guards were there.

Some thirty women turned into the square, throwing odd pieces of clothes on their backs.

"I'm leaving my jacket, you'll give it to my mother, all those who'll still be there." You heard the echo of these words from a distance.

"I recommend our women friends to go on working without a break, to replace us," cried a very small-sized girl with a shrill voice.

"That's right, comrade," said Polyxena who was walking at her side.

"No," she replied, "not comrade. The parties . . . I . . . you know . . ."

"Aren't you going to die in a moment?" said Polyxena, "Aren't you ready?"

"Yes," said the small one, "I'm ready."

"You little fool, that's what it is, to be a comrade is to be ready to die."

The small one looked at her in bewilderment. Some of the women had tears in their eyes.

"Don't cry for us, you who'll be left," said Polyxena. "We're not the only ones. In China. In the Indies. In Czechoslavakia. Cry for all the women who are falling every day under the bullets."

Those who were staying, those who were going to leave . . . She hadn't the time to say anything else, the guards pushed them and made them go out into the courtyard.

The sun of May struck them full in the face.

They stood in lines like soldiers.

Other women came from the cells and walked up to swell their ranks.

Polyxena went on, letting her thought move at its own pace like the hand of a watch. For the last time she looked on this yard. Each stone recalled death, each step evoked blood. Here it was that had fallen the madman who carried a relic and cried out, "O have pity, have pity," when one morning Fischer let off his revolver into his head. Polyxena thought she saw the bloodstains on the stones. The files went on forming round her. The women

were falling in. Here it was that they had killed off the syphilitics. "All those who have an illness . . ." It was during the rollcall. A dozen men came from the ranks thinking that they were going to be treated, even a cook who had nothing wrong with him and who thought he might manage to get away through it. They were ordered to go on a few paces, and then they were killed from behind. The women, looking on from above, had seen the whole thing; they could look out on everything that happened in the camp: the convoys of people arriving, of people going, one lot towards the execution-area, another off to the crematoria, yet another to Central Europe. Haidari filled itself up and then emptied itself like the bellows of a forge. They had also seen on the day before yesterday the general shooting of May the First. Here it was that the sick persons had been collected before their departure. I pushed them into their little carriages, I washed their feet, they were my children: thought Polyxena. Light up the radio, they called out to me, hurry off and look for my legs at the carpenter's. They were taken in November, two thousand invalids, they hadn't time to carry off their crutches. For months they had to endure dragging themselves along the ground, on their behinds, to go and urinate.

"What are you afraid of?" they used to say, "are you scared of our wooden legs, is that why you had us arrested?"

"And when they come back crippled, they'll ask me for a penny, and I just won't give it to them." Yes, yes, she remembered the gentleman who had said that to her. Two thousand invalids that were taken up in pinches and broken down like that, bit by bit. The last of them had been shot down the day before yesterday, on the First of May.

A troop of naked men went shambling to execution. When the number 200 was reached, the list stopped.

Someone cried out, "Let me warm myself a moment in the sun, it's eight years since I've seen it, I come from Nauplia Camp." From above the women used to watch them sing and dance. But that day death did not spare the sick ones nor the men who had been shut away from light for eight years.

But now the roll call began. Not a breath was heard. First of all, those condemned to death. Everything's calm. The men are still sleeping. The sun isn't yet up. The air is damp. The black coach is already there, in the street, in front of the iron bars. Some of

the women grasped that their name was being called. The man had an odd accent, and it was hard to make out what he said.

Marion was called third. Polyxena the very next. She had never come first in life; in anything. They stepped out from the ranks. Those few steps separated them off from the world of the living and led them into the home of the dead. Phrosso climbed into the coach with her daughter. The small one with the very shrill voice, with her sister. Fifu met her husband. Soula found Lefteri again, mutilated in both legs, Lefteri who'd been arrested at her place.

They went off all together.

On the road they took Spring was gambolling. Now it was quite day. A man wrote something on a scrap of paper, and, as the coach was going fast, he threw it out behind; the wind lifted it, then let it fall again. They saw an old woman, far off, bending down to take it up. "Paul Karatzas, deported since 1936, they're taking me to be killed," that was what he wrote: 36, and it was now 44.

The others regained courage. A young girl threw out her engagement ring. A woman, who had nothing else, a strip from her dress. And these messages went dancing into the sun of May.

The coach went slipping on, and left the living world behind. Passers-by and houses. "Marion," said Polyxena, "you remember the day when I said to you: children, wheelbarrows, bootblacks, old people . . . it's for them we're going to die. That's what it is, Marion, Greece. You understand, now . . . "

They came up to some cypresses. Suddenly everything was more sombre. They reached the field and came down to the earth. Arrows pointed out the way to take: Altar of Sacrifice. They saw the wall confronting them.

I used to want to be a man, I envied Phifinos when I was a child, thought Polyxena, now I'll die like a man.

The stench of the ditch suffocated them. It came from the fragments of brain and blood that rotted there. From those who'd been there before them. But, tomorrow, her own smell would be mixed with the others. It will rise up from the earth, with all the others, into the sun of May.

"Marion, you remember the day," Polyxena said again, when you said, "That's got the stink of a rich man's shit. You were the one who taught me that; I've never forgotten; but here, rich or poor, there isn't any difference . . . It was one of my dreams . . . Perhaps it's simply for that I'm being shot." In front of the wall

of Kaissariani the corpses were huddled together, chucked together, in that terrible year. Men no longer played a lone hand. All that was gone now. Most of them marched together now: to the grave.

The men who killed Polyxena were strangers come from the chilly North, men whose hair had never once in the course of their lives been stroked by women or children when they lay in pain. But those who carried off her corpse were men of her own country, animals with cold blood, without heart or lungs, without anything of the living man.

Her group went forward. They arranged themselves along the wall like books on a set of shelves. Polyxena was half naked, and the beauty-spot showed on her breast. Emile had touched it first; death, last. The crossfire of two huge machineguns swept across her from one side and then the other. She flew up from the earth and vanished into the sky, like a dove struck in midflight.

On the hills of Kaissariani the loudspeaker cried *Vengeance.* Somewhere, far away, a bell rang and people gathered together. Between a church and a chemist's shop, once, a certain Polyxena was born. And at that very moment she left the world.

She had been afraid for the last time. "Careful," she used to say—it had taken a long time to hide her doll away—"they're going to shoot us bang in the heart."

That very night, before putting out the lamp, an old woman in the shadows already began telling the story.

"O, woe, the poor young folk, O, all that blood! he pissed out of the car, but the earth wouldn't have it, she wouldn't drink it down. O, it made a scab. Woe, woe, the poor young folk, they are taken off like hunks of meat, just as if a river had gone astray, like a sea that burst out roaring. O my children, how many young folk have disappeared today in a car, in a car, my children, O how many loves today are quencht . . ."

Translated from the Greek by JEAN DARLET and L.J.

Wolfgang von Goethe

PARABLE

Once in a township that enjoys
the old form of sect-equipoise
(that is, where brawling never shocks
the protestant and catholic flocks
and where, as in his father's day,
each worships God in his own way)
we Lutheran children used to dwell,
and hymns and sermons much we heard;
and yet we childishly preferred
the clingclang *of the Catholic spell:*
the Catholic churches, in our sight,
were gay and various, rich and bright.

Monkeys and men, and children too,
ape one another, it is true:
and we, to pass the time, decided
to try a game of priests, and played:
in apron-copes we stood arrayed,
things that our sisters soon provided.
Embroidered handkerchiefs we found
would serve as stoles when pinned around;
gold paper, traced with beasts, instead
of mitres, graced the bishop's head.

Through house and garden-space, in state,
we strutted early, strutted late:
carrying out, with proper unction,
each priestly sacramental function.
Only one weakness yet dismayed us:
we knew that a good clanging clatter
was quite the most important matter—
but Fortune intervened to aid us.
There on the ground a halter lay:
we pounced and knew that we had tracked
the bellrope *that our system lacked,*
and kept it tolling all the day.
With swelling numbers loud we panted:
the whole thing went extremely well,
and, as we had no actual bell,
Dingdong *in faithful choir we chanted.*

Like an old song, our guileless game
lay hushed in memory at length . . .
Yet back into my mind it came,
the other day, with startling strength:
How well they resurrect our tricks,
the Neo-poetic Catholics!

(Written about 1815 and translated
from the German by Jack Lindsay)

Arnold Kettle

THE MENTAL TRAVELLER

I

THIS EXTRAORDINARY AND DIFFICULT POEM* HAS BEEN generally recognized as one of Blake's most remarkable achievements but very few critics seem to have risked speculating as to what it means. Those who have done so have either lost themselves in the maze of the Prophetic Books or brought forth interpretations of a highly mystical, not to say metaphysical, complexion. The immediate objection to such interpretations is that they bear so little relation to the kind of impact the poem makes. It is in no sense a misty poem, the imagery is extremely concrete, the language entirely direct. Above all it is a terrible poem, almost unbearable in the physical impact of its unshrouded images. Any "explanation" which reduces or muffles that impact or turns it into something different in quality must be suspect. I believe that the difficulty of the poem, like that of most of Blake's lyrics, is of a different sort from that generally assumed. It is a difficulty that springs less from idiosyncrasy than from unexpectedness. The Prophetic Books are highly idiosyncratic: the mythology is private, the thought obscure and sometimes perverse. But the lyrics are public poetry, complete in themselves, demanding of the reader only that he shall open his consciousness to their fullest impact. The difficulty lies in the nature of that impact. What Blake has to say is odd in the sense that it is seldom said at all and never said precisely as he says it. But it is not odd in the sense of being off-centre, psychopathic, queer. And the difficulty of "receiving" his poetry lies in ourselves rather than in the poetry. What he says is so unexpected—and to many so unpalatable— that the reader can scarcely believe his senses.

In any attempt to interpret a poem like *The Mental Traveller*— that is to say, any attempt to say not just what it " means" but

* Printed on page 93.

what it is—the reader's greatest temptation is to read into the poem what he expects or would like to find there. It is a temptation which must be frankly recognized, but it is also important, that having recognized it, we should not topple over into a temptation even more insidious, the view that denies to a poem any objective existence at all and says, in effect, one man's guess is as good as another's. This view—surprisingly common among literary critics (surprisingly because in fact it makes literary criticism an impossibility)—is as dangerous as it is defeatist. We might as well recognize at the outset that no one ever reads any poem with a blank mind, i.e. a mind free of previous experience. The important thing when we read poetry is not that we should try to cast aside all our previous experiences and attitudes but that we should be conscious of them and be prepared to have them changed. My interpretation of *The Mental Traveller* is that of a Marxist, i.e. of a reader whose previous total experience has led him to a certain standpoint which is indicated by the word Marxist. If I were not a Marxist I should probably not see in Blake's poem what I do see. But that is no proof that what I see may not be there. The only test must be in a comparison between my interpretation and the words Blake wrote. Other poems of Blake, including the Prophetic Books, may provide useful corroborative evidence and may, in particular, prepare one's mind for the sort of impact this particular poem has. But if I have forced Blake's poem into a preconceived mould of my own then my interpretation is of no use. The point I want to make is that every reader *does* begin with a preconceived mould, conscious or not. The operative word is "forced."

Another problem of method is likely to be raised. Cannot the poem have more than one meaning? It seems to me very probable that it can. Images have a significance and validity on more than one level of experience. But in any case it must always be remembered that the best, the truest interpretation does not take the place of the poem. In an important sense you can never do anything with a poem except respond to it. You cannot put it into other words. The purpose of literary criticism is not to paraphrase literature but to help the reader to come to it prepared.

II

The Mental Traveller is the description (a word which does not adequately convey what poetry does) of a cyclical process, but the

cycle it describes is not symbolic of the whole of life itself. We are taken immediately in the first verse into an imaginary world (mental = imaginary in Blake's language) which *is* a symbol of and closely relevant to our world, and it is *within* this imaginary world that the cycle takes place. This is very important because the temptation is to equate the cycle in the poem with life and the Babe with man. But in fact the imaginary world of the poem has an existence of its own quite outside the cycle of the Babe. The imaginary world of men and women goes on even when the cycle is not operative, i.e. before the birth of the Babe and when (verses 22-23) the people in the cycle have become impotent. The *ordinary* people of the imaginary world—lovers, shepherds, those who build cities—are terrified of the Babe and of the whole process of the cycle. Indeed it is only in these verses (2, 22, 23) that describe life outside the cycle that a calm and almost pastoral imagery prevails. Fruitfulness and hope are here dominant whereas in the rest of the poem any images of healthy normality are quickly given a twist which hideously inverts them.

This, then, is basic to any satisfactory reading of the poem: the cycle (which forms the essential subject of the poem) is a cycle which takes place within (and is therefore not to be identified with) the life of the imaginary world.

What is the relation of the imaginary world to the real world? It *is* the real world, i.e. it is a vision of the real world in which the life and values of men and women are relevant. And yet (by the paradox of Art) it is more real than the real world. By comparison the people of the real world are "cold" and even not quite natural. The imaginary world is, in fact, Blake's poetic vision of human life, not *different* from our life but more intensely seen, its potentialities more profoundly realized. Through the fantasy evoked by the poet's imagination a firmer grasp on reality is to be achieved. Within the world of the poem the cycle of the Babe, the Old Woman, the grown Man and the Female Babe is imposed and enacted. It is a cycle which begins in joy and is thenceforward hideous and destructive, withering all healthy life of humanity and nature. Three episodes of the cycle are presented to us.

The first and most immediately powerful episode (verses 3 to 7) is the relationship of the Babe and the Old Woman (the mother). It is a relationship in the revelation of which the most potent insights of Freud are made to seem cold and abstract. To speak of

it as a revelation of the full horror of the Oedipus complex is to debase Blake's poetry, for what is presented here is not to be adequately described as "psychological." With the woman preying on the child are associated images of the most profound significance: the crucifixion, the Promethean legend, the golden cup of the holy grail (itself a sexual symbol going back to primitive fertility ritual), the gold of the miser, the virgin mother, the chains binding mankind, the fertility of the husbandman. Almost the entire cultural, religious and economic foundations of our society are being evoked. And they are evoked to deepen and to colour an image utterly hideous: the woman living upon the shrieks of the child until the situation is reversed and he lives upon her.

In the second episode (verses 8-11) the sum of the achievement of the cyclical man's life is presented; the cottage filled with gems and gold (note the insistence on gold throughout the poem). And we are left in no doubt as to what the wealth represents in terms of human suffering and frustration. It is perhaps worth recalling here the final verse of *The Human Image* (first draft of *The Human Abstract*):

There souls of men are bought & sold
And milk-fed infancy for gold;
And youth to slaughter houses led,
And beauty for a bit of bread.

It is against this revelation of the basis of the man's wealth that we note his charity and again a stanza from the poem just quoted is not irrelevant:

Pity could be no more,
If we did not make somebody poor;
And Mercy no more could be,
If all were as happy as we.

The wealth, which is his meat and drink, is also his grief. These verses have all the paradox of Blake's dialectic, all the moral profundity of his social vision.

The third episode deals with the relationship of the man and woman within the cycle. The Female Babe is all compact of the elements associated with the poem's horrors. Like the Male Babe she withers all she touches and her substance is of gems and gold, the significance of which we have already learned. At this point it is emphasized that the people of the cycle are not simply lone individuals—there is more than one of them. The Maiden whom

the Man wins is not, apparently, the same Female Babe who has sprung from the fire, but she is similar, involved in the cycle, and will become a Woman Old, playing her allotted part. The relationships of the three cyclical men and women to whom we are referred are both cruel and dreadful in their implications. The first relationship, introduced in the deceptive language of romantic love—

But She comes to the man she loves,
If young or old, or rich or poor,

—involves immediately the driving out and reduction to beggardom of the old man. The second relationship—that of the old man and the maiden—is even more destructive. Again we are at first given the impression of a romantic fulfilment (verses 15-18). The two lovers become involved entirely in each other, oblivious of the outside world, which shrinks away (cf. "This bed thy centre is, these walls thy sphere"). In verse 18 it seems—especially if we have given the words "fear", "shrink" and "desart" in the preceding stanzas less than their full value—as though Blake is building up an image of the bliss of the isolated "soul-mates". The first two lines of verse 19 continue the process; but then comes the shock:

And on the desart wild they both
Wander in terror and dismay.

And once more we see that the images of living on one another are in fact associated not with the fulfilment but with frustration. The lovers—she beguiling him with all her arts, he living on her beguilement—are not happy but wildly unhappy. A labyrinth of fear and hatred is all that they are creating and finally, like the other characters in the cycle, they are reduced to impotence. Then and only then does life—the positive life of men and nature—assert itself, only to be again forced out as the Babe is once more found and the cycle recommences.

III

The cycle represented in the poem is acquisitive society. The appalling horrors of the poem have all the same source, possessiveness. And the poem is not an allegory. It is not the representation in symbolic terms of an abstract idea. The Babe does not "stand for" acquisitive society (in the way that most interpretations of the poem I have read make him "stand for" one of Blake's hobby-horses) any more than the Tiger in his most famous poem stands

for God or the Devil, as some critics have tried to make out. The Tiger is a tiger, the Babe is a babe. That is the first thing to insist. That they have significance and relevance beyond that of an isolated, non-symbolic image is true; but it is not an *abstract* significance. The Babe does not stand for acquisitive society; he is a babe within acquisitive society, his potentialities warped and distorted by the possessiveness first of his mother and then of himself.

In the three episodes of the cycle the source of horror is the same. The mother lives upon the child; the man lives upon the mother and then upon the gems and gold, finally upon the maiden. In each case the images are those of eating and drinking the mother "catches his shrieks in cups of gold"; to the man the gems and gold are meat and drink; it is honey and bread and wine of the maiden which he eats and drinks. And in each case the horror is associated directly with these images. It is also associated in each case with images of wealth. "The countless gold of the akeing heart" is one of the central, unforgettable images of the poem, and it is linked with the mother numbering the nerves of the child like a miser counting his gold and with the very essence of the maiden who is the product of fire and gems and gold. It is from these two central, recurring sets of images that we shall get the core and meaning of the poem. They are images of possessiveness and exploitation.

They hold together the three episodes of the poem, which at first appear to have little organic connection. For what Blake is saying is that the psychological and emotional problems of personal relationships are inextricably linked up with the social and economic basis of human activity. This is indeed the principal "discovery", the very essence of the poem. The dreadful mother-child relationship and the no less desperate frustration of the two lovers are presented to us not merely as ghastly, isolated phenomena but as part and parcel of a situation in which human beings spend their lives preying upon each other. Each of the characters in the cycle seeks his satisfactions at the expense of others and what Blake is saying is that personal exploitation is the other side of and inseparable from economic exploitation.

In this vision of bourgeois society Blake goes so deep that to most bourgeois readers the poem is incomprehensible. Since possessive relationships and economic exploitation seem to such readers either natural or inevitable, they find it almost impossible

to realise what Blake is driving at ; consequently they are disturbed by the poem but cannot understand it. That the cherished symbols of Christianity and the scarcely less sacred concepts of individualist romantic love should be associated with a way of life represented as hideous and frustrating is more than they bargain for in a work of art.

For Blake is not stating in this poem the perfectly respectable view that the Oedipus relationship is common and interesting but that it is typical and horrible. He is not saying that economic success carries with it the obligation to be charitable, but that the good of charity is a poor and inadequate thing beside the evil of exploitation and no generosity can compensate for the situation of either exploiter or exploited. Above all Blake is saying that possessive individualism makes a happy relationship between men and women impossible. The image of the bourgeois man and woman wandering in terror and dismay in the desert which they have created for themselves is one of the most extraordinary insights in our literature. The man and woman, in their desperate attempt to achieve a complete fulfilment in one another, turn away from the social world. Ecstatically they try to live upon each other, the woman using her every art to beguile the man, he desperately desiring to be beguiled. And actually within the relationship there is not security but fear. Love and hate become inseparable. Instead of fulfilment there is a labyrinth of frustration. In Blakean language the emanation is for ever defeated; the spectres triumph.

Inevitably they triumph, for the men and women of the cycle have sacrificed humanity to possessiveness. It is only when humanity triumphs that the emanation—the potentialities of the individual—can be realised and the spectre—the frustrating elements—defeated.

Each man is in his Spectre's power
Untill the arrival of that hour
When his Humanity awake
And cast his own Spectre into the Lake.

The meaning of *The Mental Traveller* is that as long as the cycle of acquisitive society continues man is his spectre's power. It is not a propagandist poem. It does not tell how the cycle can be broken. But with a passionate and dreadful clarity it illuminates the human situation which it reveals.

A. Vilnius

JULIAN TUWIM

I CAME ACROSS TUWIM'S POETRY FOR THE FIRST TIME IN my life in 1934. I was at that time in one of the final forms of the *gymnasium*, that I attended, which was then deeply engaged in the study of the Romanticists, Mickiewicz, Slowacki and Krasinki, that trinity who have scarcely any equals in Slav literature, and whose influence, after a century, is still felt in Polish poetry, language and even politics. Nevertheless, I knew nothing about Tuwim. It was therefore with surprise and distrust that I first read his verses, copied from literary weeklies, and passed on to me by my school-mates, whose main characteristics were a general lack of interest in literature as a whole, and a special dislike of the poetry we were studying at school.

But I soon understood why my school-mates, who considered poetry as so much nonsense composed by effeminates, took the trouble to copy Tuwim's poetry from periodicals and even learn it by heart. In the first place, because his verses described the reality that surrounded us; in the second place, because his language and vocabulary had nothing artificial about them: they were the language we were using ourselves. And yet there was a difference: he managed to turn our everyday language, our very slang, into fireworks and unexpected imagery. After the Faustian heights of the Romanticists, he was like the feel of good earth. And, as the political and social reality around us grew uglier and our means of protest scarcer, the Heine-like irony of his work, unafraid of priests, colonels and policemen, appealed even to those of us who had no ear for poetry.

Because of the circumstances under which I made my first acquaintance with Tuwim's poetry, he has remained as close to me as, for instance, as Mayakovsky was to his Russian generation. At the same time, because of the feeling of nearness and well-nigh familiarity, I, for one, have taken some time in realizing his

greatness and understanding that he stands among the great poets of our epoch.

Julian Tuwim was born in 1894 in Lodz, that ugliest and most industrialized of Polish cities. But the ugliness of Lodz never repelled Tuwim, and he has made it clear in many of his verses how much he owes to the Polish Manchester, and how much he loves it. His parents were middle-class Jews, but his native tongue has never been Yiddish. Polish has always been his medium, although his Russian is also excellent.

Until 1939 Tuwim's poetical activity revolved about *Skamander*. Around this periodical, which continued to appear spasmodically from 1919 to 1939, were grouped Lechon, Iwaszkiewicz, Slonimski, Tuwim and Wierzynski. The group was united by common artistic standards rather than world outlook. It began to break up in 1935, when, under the impact of fascism and anti-semitism, the Skamanderites, whose original idea was to keep politics out of poetry, felt impelled to stand up for the most essential principles of humanism. Tuwim and Slonimski took up the most outspoken stand against fascism and anti-semitism; Lechon passed into the ranks of reaction.

What was the background of *Skamander?* During the nineteenth century, the century of Poland's oppression, Polish poets had played the part of politicians, social philosophers, prophets, and tribunes. Mickiewicz, Slowacki and the arch-conservative Krasinski had played the roles of biblical prophets, and saved the nation from despair and de-nationalization. Their great force saved their poetry from artistic flaws, but the lesser poets that followed them did not succeed so well. So that when, in 1919, Poland was reborn as a state, and the question of national survival seemed no longer to be the most important problem, while the other political and social questions could be left to politicians and social reformers, the young Polish poets, grouped around *Skamander*, decided it was time to write about anything they fancied. "We do not want great words;" they proclaimed in *Skamander*, "we want great poetry: then each word will become great." They enriched Polish poetry with new themes, the most important of them being the urban theme. Here Tuwim, the inhabitant of the most "city-like" of Polish cities, and the bearer of the urban traditions of the Jews as opposed to the rural traditions of the Poles, excelled right from the beginning. The Skamanderites also

enriched the Polish tongue with new words, and Polish prosody with new metres and rhyme-systems. However, contrary to the futurists, cubists and the like, the Skamanderites never went in for poetic prose or dissonant verse. Their lines generally preserved the traditional "syllabic" metre and traditional rhyme, but became more rhythmical, complicated and unexpected.

Very soon Tuwim's superiority to the other Skamanderites became obvious. The wealth of his language came like a shock with every verse he wrote. (It is not in vain that his favourite reading remains Brueckner's *Etymological Dictionary of the Polish Language*). The facility with which he combines the traditional rhyme with assonances, and the established verse-building with the most amazing innovations, was something quite new in Polish poetry since Slowacki's *Pan Bieniowski*. It soon became obvious to most readers of poetry that Tuwim was too great to be labelled.

One cannot describe colours and smells, even less so poetry, which contains both, and music as well. I feel that the best I can do is to quote what Professor Manfred Kridl, of Columbia University, has written about Tuwim's poetry in his *History of Polish Literature*! "His work is characterized by an extraordinary force of eruptive lyricism. The emotional tension is so great that almost every verse by Tuwim is like the eruption of a volcano composed of a series of sudden explosions, out of which springs pictures, apparitions, poetical formulations, abbreviations of mental and emotional processes, symbols of matters eternal, derived from commonplace things and, as it were, accidental, unexpected similes and associations—and all that is if still dripping with fresh blood. Word is to him an element, a metaphysical reality, which has become flesh, and on which he feeds, which he drinks, and which he inhales. . . ." Tuwim's poetical vision does not stop here. It turns ordinary things (for instance, furniture) into extraordinary. It attacks our eyes, nose, brain and heart. It discovers poetry in classified advertisement, cheap cinemas, the amorous gambols of maid-servants and penniless army recruits, the quarrels of taxi-drivers and cabbies, proletarian rickets-ridden children sailing paper-boats in the sewers, Polish students beating up a bearded old Jew, and Pilsudski playing cards with himself.

The Skamanderites began their poetical activity convinced that they could leave social and political problems outside the realm of poetry, and could concentrate on subjective experiences. But as

they were not purely aesthetes or lotus-eaters, reality taught them otherwise. From the very beginning of his poetical activity Tuwim refused to get lost in the sheer enjoyment of words. He showed as far back as 1919 a political intuition which has remained extraordinary until today. In one of his early satirico-political verses, *Die Kaiserliche Deutsche Revolution,* written at a time when a belief in German socialism was almost an article of faith with most Jewish-Polish intellectuals, he explored all the weaknesses of the German Social Democrats and prophesied the return of German reaction. The poem is a classical example of Tuwim's political poetry; it is compact of an irony that one can parallel only in Heine; it is a merciless pamphlet; and yet it remains poetry of the purest kind. Since that savage, scurrilous poetical pamphlet, Tuwim has often had recourse to this poetical form in his fight against Polish reaction and obscurantism. And, however powerful his indignation, he has always succeeded in creating great poetry without using great words, so that, to paraphrase the Skamanderites, each of his words becomes great.

His keen irony combined with his mastery of the Polish tongue —a mastery unmatched since Juliusz Slowacki's *Pan Bieniowski*— made him already before 1939 into the most famous, the most admired and the most attacked Polish poet. Hated by the Catholic clergy, the right-wing parties, and quite a number of Polish poets, who could not forgive a Jew for towering above them in the mastery of their "own" language, Tuwim saved his life only by escaping from Poland in 1939. He spent the war years in Brazil and the United States. The tragedy of the Jewish people in Poland touched him profoundly—so much so that it seemed for a time that he would give up enriching Polish language and poetry. But his Jewish-Polish resilience and faith in the future won. He put all his longing for Poland, all his hatred of Poland's native destroyers, all his odium of the Teutonic spirit, all his love of the exterminated Jewish millions, into poetry. And the fruit of his exile, of the period enclosed in space between Rio de Janeiro and New York, and in time between November, 1940 and July, 1944, has been over three hundred pages of poetry—almost as much as his complete poetical output previous to 1940.

* * *

The victory of the socialist forces in Poland prevented the bitter sacrifices of the Polish and Jewish peoples from becoming meaningless. Julian Tuwim returned to the new Poland and took his stand unreservedly on the side of the new socialist and democratic régime. In the atmosphere of the new Poland, in the atmosphere of humanism and optimism, he finished the poem, whose main fragments he had written in exile, and in 1949 *Kwiaty Polskie* (Polish Flowers) appeared.

Polish Flowers is unlike any other poem in Polish literature, although it does have two precedents: Byron's *Don Juan* and Slowacki's *Pan Bieniowski*. The actual story and plot are almost non-existent, the *à propos*, brackets and digressions forming most of the contents. But the most amazing feature of the poem is the manner in which a continuity is achieved between absolutely different and disconnected fragments, moods and subjects. This is assured by a chain of associations—logical, visual, acoustic and olfactory—that remind one of *Ulysses*. An extreme vividness of language is combined with a striking juxtaposition of imagery. *Polish Flowers* is a *tour de force*, a work of genius, but also the work of a very clever craftsman. As such its place is assured among the masterpieces of Polish poetry—and poetry, I ought to emphasise is the greatest creation of the Polish national genius.

Nor should one pass in silence Tuwim's work as translator of Pushkin. His translations of Russia's greatest poet are the work of great love and talent, and such is their perfection that they form already a definite enrichment of Polish literature.

Tuwim's poetry is practically untranslatable. Its vitality, full-bloodedness, explosiveness, music and elegance can possibly be rendered in another Slavonic language, but never *fully* in a language like English or French, in which verb, noun and sentence-order have almost finite values. Another difficulty which confronts the would-be translator of Tuwim is to render the host of associations which every one of Tuwim's verses evokes in a Pole, but not in a stranger to Polish life. With these two reservations in mind, the reader of the translations here given should be able to obtain a very good idea of the poetry of Poland's greatest contemporary poet, the man who has risen above the "isms" of his period and secured himself a place among the great poets of the first half of our century.

Examples of Tuwim's lyrical poetry will be found in ARENA 2; here his more satirical and pugnacious verses are exemplified.

AT THE GATES OF PARIS.

(written at the time of the Versailles Treaty).

. . . Yesterday's looters, democrats today,
braggarts who cringe at policemen on their beats,
think if your guns had had their battering way
and, with your marshals, crashed down Paris streets?
If into Concorde had come the very Kaiser
with all his helmet plumes, on a snowy horse—
you'd all have burst, eh, like a haughty geyser
and flooded earth with his triumphal course?
To Essen as pilgrims you'd have all gone creeping
and set up Krupps as an idol to adore,
roared Deutschland über alles *even when sleeping,*
and licked all Hindenburg's boots and asked for more.
The canaille of Brest would then have gone nach westen
with fat vonhoffens *setting forth the Peace,*
and a general's fist with a most heroic gesture
would have announced that Europe's life must cease.
Then you'd have built your Police, in a cosmic edition,
and we'd have got muzzles, numbered, for our wear,
gathering your gangsters' holy ammunition,
toiling enslaved for your gang-rule everywhere.
Prussia's reserve we'd have been, poor odds and sods,
William the Conqueror's good goaded cattle:
you, crazed with pride, the darlings of the gods,
predestined schutzmans, *bullies, thugs of battle.*
You'd have burrowed deep in earth with arrogant glee
and toppled down the world past any hope, a
disease, a new Black Death: we'd have had to flee
hochhohenzollernvonpreusseneuropa.
Some far-off savage isle we'd have had to seek
to build a Europe there in the wilds, seceding,
ere with Teutonic stench and a treacherous clique
we'd live in your crushing culture and keep on breeding.

PRIDE.

Richer the might my will's creatively enjoyed:
like clay in moulding hands, the form comes as I plan it,
though in my soul it weighed, hard, obstinate, like granite,
my soul that's far from moans of the hamletian void.
I've learned life everywhere; and in myself I've learned
that all I own one day I'll cast away, grown scornful.
I'll go: maybe a sense of loss will hold me mournful,
or else I'll gulp the great and breathless joys I've earned.
I'm proud: alone I've grasped my imperfection
even in this will that welds my soul with its persistence.
I turn in pride from Golden Cities in the distance
and pass them by. I know I'll find there petrifaction.

EXPERIMENT.

Spring, sharply and tellingly
swelling compellingly,
I think of you in the night of your birth
with cool precision I think of the earth
Here
is thawing
snow:
here
it's warmed
below:
tufts of soil brownly show:
Powisle, toucht to its core, is swelling-o.
Melts the last icicle,
the waters are moving free
(lovely though pseudo-classical)
from petrified nature, see,
a new young world in the tree
suddenly
buds swellingly
sharply, impellingly.
Conscientious and steady
like a surgeon getting ready
with the words that I have sung
I bare the nerves of the Polish tongue
just as I'd do, for instance,

anatomization:
as little then I'd chance it—
with the same deliberation
I'd put on the slide
Spring
a small greenfrog of a thing.
I'd cut in a curve,
drive down the side,
and with my well-aimed lancet
hit the nerve.
it quivered: it's alive.
The difference is trivial,
merely this,
it wasn't a surgeon we took for our trial
but a poet instead,
and that's the whole lesson I want to deliver.
O little greenfrog of a spring, a spring,
in the night of your birth
you lie sprawled on this paper awaiting my art,
I lift my pen that's aimed at your heart,
look, I'm going to start.
Once more the last wink
of a halfshut eye
the last bare shrinking
over a hair
and
I prick
to the quick
of the common word.
It stirred,
it spirted into the sun, it flicked,
and there in the shameless elder boughs
(elder bows!)
tosses my amorous maddening head.
And now, no shame over words any more!
Sing of the Spring O the glorious thing
sing of the Spring the victorious thing
for that is the simple TRUTH.
Poets,
here's the one secret of our trade.

Break right inside!
and even Spring will turn into Spring.
Listen, what wonders are happening,
and see how the Spring, when I give it a nick
quickens and sings in my five spelled senses:
the snow is thawing, there's warmth below,
tufts of soil brownly show,
*Powisle toucht to the core is swelling-o.**

HOUSEHOLDERS.

Horrible flats and houses, horrible places
horribly owned by horrible middleclasses.
The mould crawls up the walls, the soot defaces,
a wintry horror, a dark agony passes.
Morning, a ramble of stammering, a prittleprattle:
it's rainy it costs a lot and this and that.
They walk about a little, sit down a little,
and everything's spectral, everything's ghostly-flat.
They verify time and the pockets of their trousers,
pull down lapels, smooth ties, assume their face,
and go with dignified step out from their houses
on to the earth, a well-known circular place.
And here they come, tightbuttoned down the street,
looking rightward and then leftward on their course,
and they see as a separate thing whatever they meet:
that house . . . that Stasiek . . . and that tree . . . that horse.
They take the newsprint dough in their hands and chew
and chew it flatly-pulped and tasting-sickly,
till the paper-leaven works flatulently through
their brains and sends their heads all swelling thickly
and again they say :That Ford . . . that cinema-show
that God . . . that Russia . . . radio war sport rents . . .
In layers the odious hallucinations grow
and spectrally haunt the jungle of events.
The flatulence turns heavier in their heads,
by dusk each skull hangs blindly as it rots,
nosing for thieves they crawl beneath their beds

* *Powisle,* the land along the Vistula.

and knock their brows on chilly chamberpots.
Then verify watches and receipts once more,
the darns on trouser-seats, and all the rest,
their holy profits, their worshipt property-store,
all that's their own, exclusively possessed.
And then each man of them prays, "From sudden death
from war . . . from hunger . . . give us rest." He drowses
and chin-on-chest he sleeps with stertorous breath,
horrible middleclass in horrible houses.

POLISH FLOWERS.

I. Memory of his Accountant Father.

. . . I drink the milk and then I say
"Thanks Mrs. Michalowa;" then,
Father, I go. I take my way
still fierier through the world of men.
Handfuls of corn from earth I tear,
I stamp, I snatch at joy, and go—
grief joy or loss? I do not know:
revolt pang passion all are there.
I'm like a shell that wrath impels:
Lodz children orchards peasant-bells
and earth so rich so generous warm
and the sun spattering gold on earth—
a shell of wild revolt that's hurled
to hit and smash! a wrecking storm:
I'll build anew, revenge all dearth,
break evil down.
My father writes
and writes for ever in his ledger—
of all the banks of all the world—
the fortunes of each lord and cadger,
the factory-owner's ranked delights,
palaces, coaches, diamonds, pearls,
Father, I shout across your nights:
You see that bottle there—I will it!
Grab as your son commands and spill it,
flood all the guzzling properties,
spatter red ink in righteous rage

across each cursed ledger-page,
blot all the crimes you've entered neatly—
across the city's hugeous muzzle
that's wrinkled deep with bitter streets
and scabbed with revolution's wounds,
slitted with turbid courtyard-eyes
where anger flares in glints of steel
and spirts of fire at moments rise,
mouths pouting open to spout blood
with teeth as black as cogs of wheels,
flesh pockt with ragged windowholes
factory-blotcht a rash of crowds
where acids viciously corrode
shaken with palsy of the looms
where beltstorms whirl in spinning glooms
and lumbering machines take toll
yes on the unhealed city-muzzle
which not so long ago was wealed
by earringed kalmuks swinging sabres
we've seen skyscrapingly up tower
Scheibler's hundred-millioned power.

II. Prayer for Poland.

Set all the clouds ablaze on high,
toll in our hearts a bell of gold,
break Poland open broad and bold
as thunder breaks a darkened sky.
Let us clean out our father's house,
sweep holy ruins, charred, away,
the sins, the curse that burns our past:
let it be poor but clean, we pray,
claimed from the graveyard-smell at last.
When from the dead we see arise
our country gold in freedom's dawn,
O give us leaders wise as good,
and let their powers from strength be drawn.
And let our people raised again,
lift sinewy fists of stubborn will,
let workers certainly obtain
their labour's fruit in town and village,

chase out the bankers and restrain
money from breeding money still.
Arm the haughty with humility
and give the humble an angry pride.
Your sunlight, wafted far and wide,
warms Jew and Grecian equally.
And take away the stupid crowns
from pompous creatures pufft and dull,
and where a satrap growls and frowns
set on his desk at once a skull.
For braggarts warring after fame
keep thunderbolts that you can toss:
deprive them of their devil's game,
their swordhilt made your martyr-cross.
Make hopes that broken years revealed
in generous hearts, your new design:
give us back bread from Polish fields,
and coffins sawn from Polish pine.
But most of all restore our Words
that cheats made twisted and unholy:
give back their truth and single light,
let freedom now mean freedom wholly,
let right mean nothing else than right.
And see that man proclaims your name
less now in hymns than things they do:
take from the fool the power to dream
and make the noble dream come true.
Grant that we bless with tearless eyes
the fire that made our home a shell
if it's a fire that purifies
our slightly rotten souls as well.
Let every Poland now be great,
her sons of flesh or spirit, all,
stand great of heart if wide her state,
and great of heart if she is small.
Squeezed between Germany's brute order
and the new hundred-nationed Nation,
we need a neighbourly eastern border—
but cut our west off in damnation.
Wrench from the Cross your bloody hand,

wrench it, nails and all, away,
Cover your eyes, turn from our land,
when rises the revenging day.
Veil the commandment of your God
as Warsaw-wards we wade the flood—
through Tatrras of dead German bodies,
through a Baltic of their beastly blood.

Translated from the Polish by JACK LINDSAY.

Translator's Note: On the top-storey of the complicated building, an eagle-poet in an eyrie above the shattered city of Warsaw. His library had been burnt during the war, with its unique collection of works on the Polish language; but already on his shelves I saw scores of strange dictionaries and grammars, Bantu and Melanesian and so on, for his idle reading. In the filtered light of leaves and curtains above the faint rumbling of traffic in the streets which the liberating armies found almost impassable with graves, he is working at a dozen tasks, poetry, the theatre, editing, translating, anthologising. The manuscript of one of his works, thought lost, was dug up in rubble, with a dead man crouched over it as if defending the poet's words with his life, his body. There is no time to grow old, and the only relaxation is to take on more work, in a country so hungry for things of the spirit. "I was growing older all the while in America; now I have reversed the process, growing younger in the stubborn youth of my country." He is quick, patient, precise, merry; and loves Dickens, Gogol, the great laughers. A poet, a great poet, who is at last at home. Not even surprised to find his poetry come true: he knew it all the while.

Leonid Leonov

ROAD TO OCEAN

IN OCEAN WE SAW AND TOUCHED MANY THINGS WHICH filled us with joy. We felt sad when we had to leave, we felt as though we were giving up a trim comfortable house for an unfinished structure, still leaking, with no roof, with black rafters overhead and coarsely laid bricks still showing in the unplastered walls . . . We had made the round of the transformed planet on foot. We liked everything, even the very different colours of the evening clouds. Sometimes, as though by tacit

agreement, we stopped, picked up a handful of the new rich earth, and for a long while, with misty eyes, examined its grain. The combined efforts of excavators, planners, leaders—my contemporaries!—must surely have left some mark on this earth, we thought. Then we looked at the land clothed in forests, from which would come the timber of the future, and we were overwhelmed with pride at belonging to the generation of pioneers.

And though the span of the future is boundless, we had hardly enough time to turn the leaves of his magnificent new edition of the world, corrected and supplemented by the genius of man. But after all we had no intention of writing a Baedeker of the new planet. It would have been as ridiculous as trying to set the brilliance of noon down on a picture postcard. We shall limit ourselves to simple enumeration: reports sent by pioneers are always sketchy and inaccurate.

And so we tried to be in all places at once. We went to the opening of gigantic hydraulic stations; and the morning that the waters of the Mediterranean Dam, boiling and storming, rushed into the Central Sahara setting turbines in motion, will remain in my memory the greatest triumph of reason and of man no longer confined to the prison-like frontiers of ancient states. We went to remote Arctic provinces and ate excellent grapes grown on the seventieth parallel: we became acquainted with the newest methods of wiring electric plants: we visited marvellously complex combines where anything could be manufactured out of anything. because matter is one and can be found everywhere. We asked the price of such and such an article, and were told that it was cheap, that is to say, uninteresting; we tried to find out how all this had been organized, and I am glad that my ignorance of technology exempts me from the necessity of citing facts and figures.

Not astonished* by the technical cunning of our descendants, we looked attentively at the people themselves. It seemed to us that human nature had improved. The people stood more erect, seemed more assured whether because each one was aware of his neighbour at his side and did not fear him, or because the clean air of the new time did not contain the bacillus of falsehood. I

* We were not astonished. The ancients spoke with awe of countries wherein wool grew on trees. They were called liars, yet their only mistake was to call cotton wool. Astonishment will always be the lot of those who take the horizon for the frontier of the universe.

expected them to boast of the perfection of their social order and I should not have contemned their pride, but actually they took no notice of the social order. Here, man's natural state had at last been attained—he was free, he was not exploited, and he rejoiced in the work of hand and brain. But although everything was within reach—bread, work and fate itself—we often saw people with careworn faces. We understood that sadness dwelt among them, and that they, too, knew tragedy, though of a kind more worthy of man's dignity.

This struck us particularly when Ocean prepared to honour the first interplanetary explorer, This whole episode is still vivid to me. I remember clearly that for two weeks the newspapers trumpeted the news of the brave traveller's imminent return and announced the exact date. He was the man of the year, and countless photographs of him were scattered over the cities of the earth. Everyone knew his biography and could recite the most important events of his life; girls kept in their favourite books the photographs of his two sons who had accompanied him to the arctic regions of the universe. And that year the mother of the daredevils was the mother of all heroes who dreamed of performing deeds worthy of historical record. The problem of this adventure was not to die "over there" for the glory of human curiosity—death had long ago lost its sensational character and was incapable of stirring the people—but to return alive without causing grief to anyone and to bring back the crown of the unknown as a trophy. To honour the homecomers, on the day they were scheduled to return, their native planet put on its most brilliant best and doubtless floated in the universe like a particle of down struck by a ray of sunlight . . . One day passed, then a second and a third, and the ship did not return.

On the fifth day the whole world became anxious over the fate of four human beings. A prolonged and bitter discussion was carried on over the radio, in which the constructors of all five continents took part. The navigational properties of the ship were subjected to exacting criticism: implausible hypotheses were advanced; the newspapers received hundreds of thousands of letters recommending ways and means of rescuing the explorers from "out there," among the worlds. The reputation of the astroplane's builders hung on a hair. For the time being no one accused them, but these men knew real unhappiness. The failure of the flight

was equivalent to moral death for them, because the calling of man had by then been definitely identified with the *concept of creativity*, that is to say, mastery. Under the pressure of public opinion and at the request of the builders a government commission was formed of over two hundred members charged with subjecting the absent ship to expert analysis, determining the positions of the planets on the day of the ship's departure and the day of its scheduled return, and working out the formulae of interplanetary gravitation, the pressures, velocities, parabolae and everything on which the success of the enterprise depended. The conclusions of the commission were very favourable, but the architect of OCEAN I did not smile upon hearing of his acquittal. His ship had not returned.

One woman—the wife of the captain and the mother of two of the explorers—might be said to have most at stake in the fate of these brave men. And while Alexei Nikitich and myself should have been glad to comfort her, we did not visit her: sinister rumours had begun to spread among the nations, and in what language other than silence could we address her? We saw her only at the last session of the government commission . . . The attendants did not leave, they were waiting for someone. Then, through the high door, very simply she entered all alone, the modest little mother of the giants, as her contemporaries called her. A stern old man whom we had not noticed before hurried to meet her halfway, All present rose respectfully when, in silence, he stooped to embrace her thin shoulders. The two sat down on the left side of the amphitheatre, where the seats of honour stood, almost like dots in the distance.

The ellipsoid dome hung over the gigantic yet humdrum hall. Its very dimensions conveyed a feeling of emptiness, twilight and coolness. (What ovations must have shaken these walls on the day of the departure of OCEAN I!) And though this was the main hall of the Central Observatory, nowhere did we see the familiar thick pipes with glass lenses, nor the marvellous all-seeing screens of which the radio-technicians of antiquity had dreamed. At a given signal, a man noiselessly went to his post at the board representing the sky in mercatorial projection; the lights went out. The switching-on of the electronic telescopes was accompanied by an increasing hum. The dull metallic ringing was followed by the roar of remote avalanches, and suddenly something stirred in the

emptiness, something of which we took cognizance with fear and trembling. A formless dark body followed by a smaller body passed before us. Kurilov covered his mouth, as men do in a high wind: I thought my shivering was from cold. A feverish chill touched my forehead. The flashes became more rapid, the stars began to come up from the darkness . . . and since we had not left the earth it seemed that the universe was hurtling through us, the paralyzed witnesses of its secret. In the chaos a luminous disc was being conceived, still naive, as in a morning dream; it grew, we began to sense its spherical form; then misty outlines, such as are seen by fortunate voyagers began to make their way through layers of inert clouds. I gripped a rail in front of me; it creaked. My confusion passed into vague anticipation, as happens in disasters—I felt as though we were falling upon a strange ghostly and virginal continent, never to return.

Our sight became sharp as that of a god. No one had known matter so intimately. For entire minutes we distinguished the very cells of that aqueous stuff, oblong, almost crystalline, with green pulsating foam. It seemed that you had only to stretch out your hand to touch streaming trunks of trees resembling submarine plants; they swayed in the damp purplish fog. An armoured insect sensing the presence of the unknown superstitiously sought shelter in a crevice, and a blade of grass bent under the weight of dew; a quiet evening was descending upon the evening star . . . Like gods, and yet, in a way, like intruding bats, we soared over these hairy hills, now looking attentively, now shying off, fearful because we were not reflected in the waters over which we bent our faces. But, omnipotent, we were powerless to move so much as a grain of sand; omniscient, we could not find the tracks of our brave and beloved explorers, the first human tracks on another planet. We searched everywhere and could not find them, we could not . . . when suddenly a wail wove itself into the sombre hum. There could be no mistake; it was the cry of a human being. Everyone remarked how the mother jumped from her seat with raised hands in the direction of the voice: André ; . . "No, these are just bolides," the man at the board muttered. When this magic flight through eternity was over, the shadows crept out of their boxes, and earthly dusk entered the hall. With a guilty expression and an apologetic cough, the mother said goodbye. Her sunken eyes seemed young to me. What had rejuvenated her? If

not the greatness of her grief, it must have been her proud joy in knowing that she had given her immense homeland the dearest of her possessions.

"Search more thoroughly, search every night," the stern old man said as he left. (He was giving orders to *search* the *universe*. Power! So that's what power is, and such its price . . .) But in fact all search was futile. The fourth paragraph of the commission's final report mentioned somewhat vaguely that according to all available data the supplies of energy, gas and provisions carried by the ship would be nearing exhaustion (read: were completely exhausted),), and yet the newspapers were forbidden to print obituaries of the lost men. All four were still counted members of their organizations, they were listed as absent on official trips for an indefinite time. Was this not the most perfect form of immortality: *to be treated as living*. . . . Meanwhile new lists of volunteers for a new voyage into the unknown were posted in the streets. Alongside the name of each candidate was the enumeration of his scientific works and sporting achievements, which were to guide the public in the judgment of his merits.

And it was only after a plant had won the competition and was authorized to build OCEAN II, that the landing of OCEAN I in the district of Tarussa near Moscow, became known; the unbroken interplanetary vigil had missed its arrival. To avoid an influx of the curious, a cordon was thrown around the place and all communication was cut off.

For several days after that the radio broadcasted incomplete fourth-hand reports of the return; something was being concealed. No one, except the doctors, had as yet seen *them*. In daily bulletins issued by the first government secretary there was much about the exhaustion of the navigators, but for some reason only two names were mentioned. Then it was learned that the captain's two sons had perished. Leading editorials written in the language of deep and solemn sorrow were devoted to the first human graves beyond the earth: thus the settlement of newly discovered continents had always begun . . . That day I walked in the streets of many cities, and it seemed to me that all the girls in the world felt widowed. The mother of the lost wrote a short letter to the newspapers; she shared the grief of her native globe because her children had been good boys and had always tried to justify the love and trust of their friends. She received so many letters—it seemed that all

the young men of the earth wanted to be her sons. Nothing had so forcefully demonstrated the unity felt by mankind.

A day was set and a modest ceremony arranged for the entry of the new Columbus into the capital. An unprecedented migration of people from one hemisphere to the other began: and they came, not so much to see him or to hear his voice for a little while, as to greet him with thunderous earthly cheers. Kurilov and I took Liza with us to attend the ceremony, to show her how beautiful is man cleansed of original mire.

Everyone who was there must know that when you leave the quay and walk along Stalin and Yang Tze Street, past Academy Square, turning towards the southwest, you see the two-humped hill of Unity with a gigantic fountain on its second top, the so-called Tree of Water. This is unquestionably the most magnificent spot in Ocean . . . The glossy walls of the Palace of Statistics covered with Chinese lacquer reflected the bridge across the canal, and it was as though the arches of this bridge, delicate as a complex mathematical equation, pierced the throng of the fantastic ancient ghosts on the porcelain panels. Long before the celebration began, we went up on escalators to our regular café. But the tables had been removed to make room for the influx of people. Every spot was full of noise and laughter. The flocking together began at daybreak, and the immense fields beyond Nantao sparkled with a mass of planettes. It was hot: the sun-coolers were inadequate against June. We drank gingery water with a grainy taste. An immense radius of the city extended before us. How it had changed since the days of rickshaw coolies who ran through the streets and of the unyielding gentlemen who lived opulently in the concessions . . . Far beyond the bay an island appeared through a greenish mist, and behind, resembling historic inscriptions on faded grey canvas, lay the ancient quarters of Pu-Tung and heroic Chapei.

While Kurilov argued with Liza (at that moment I had not guessed the dénouement), I glanced through a newspaper. The routine news began only on page 10; on page 11, under a flashy title, there was an interview with a homely woman stricken with spotted typhus; her photograph was shown and a picture of the clinic in which she had been placed; I did not understand what it was all about. I also read the verses of a popular poet who wrote in sonorous images about walking. It was a kind of lyrical treatise

which showed how walking benefited the function of the heart and the muscles, and at the same time described the sunny spots on the path along which the poet passed. . . Suddenly the distant thunder of orchestras sounded. I dropped the newspaper.

At once there was silence. The streets below seemed empty because of the quiet and they shone as though rubbed with heavy oil. There was a general stir, everything around us seemed to take wing like a flock of birds. People bared their heads. I rushed forward, and the weight of a mighty unanimous sigh fell on my shoulders. I assumed all the time that I would see a man with a dark face of Lazarus who had spent three days on the other side of life; that he would walk alone, this captain of super-distant voyages, spreading around him the silence and cold eternity. My assumptions collapsed at once. Suddenly on the harbour boom which sloped down to the square three men appeared. And once again I saw the same tall clean-shaven old man wearing a broad-brimmed black hat—the chairman of the executive committee of this hemisphere. Beside him, arm in arm, walked a solid, well-set man in a dark beret, with the intelligent and virile face of Koloman Wallisch, who long ago, at the dawn of this era, was hanged by the savages of the earth. As he walked he looked straight at the sun with unblinking eyes. The third, the doctor and the captain's aide, walked a few steps behind the other two. Eyes and telemechanisms followed every one of their movements. The orchestras were silent, no one shouted to greet these men, and a hundred times more impressive was this human speechlessness.

He ascended the platform, and at once a little girl with a bouquet of flowers, which she herself had picked, ran up to him across the square. All the planet, jubilant and laughing, watched the flashing of her suntanned knees. Not daring to say a word from rapture and fear, the girl held out the flowers to *him*—once, twice, but he kept standing and staring at the sky. It was blue sky, a kindly sky, quite unlike that which had killed his sons. The crowd stirred, moved slightly forward, and a rustle of conjectures floated confusedly above their heads. The old man in the immense hat whispered something into the captain's ear. The captain shook himself and bending, with apologetic, cautious hands, began to grope in the air before him. Without noticing it he stepped on the flowers which had fallen to the ground . . . But he caught the child, tenderly touched her face, and raised her to his head;

everyone moved from his place, and at that moment it seemed to me a storm was unleashed with one single blast . . .

The report did not begin until our hearts were unburdened of all that had gathered in them during the three and a half years of this unprecedented heroic voyage. In a low, almost prosaic, voice (the wise simplicity of this celebration was deeply moving), the man in the beret spoke of his gratitude to the nations of the earth for their sympathy and support; he expressed regret that fate had deprived him of the possibility of repeating this voyage; he told briefly of his companions' death, of the catastrophe during return trip, of the things he had seen and touched, his memory of which was still warm. These years had aged him, but he had the strength to jest and say a few sharp, unforgettable words.

Then came the salutes and speeches, and it was not length but brevity, nay, aphoristic terseness, which the people considered meritorious. On an invisible screen, magnified and almost three-dimensional, appeared the representatives of nations, countries, continents; a boy behind me (perhaps a radio enthusiast of those days?) whispered with a hurried gasp: "Now Africa is going to speak!" And then we saw the famous Samuel Bothead. My heart began to pound, it was as though the stately, grey-haired Negro were my dearest friend. He had greatly aged since we had gone to see him at Aden, and he limped perceptibly as a result of the wound he had received in the battle of Shanghai. His voice, however, had preserved something of its former passionate impetuosity which had so attracted me. In speaking he beat time with the club on which he leaned; he spoke of the infinite spaces of the universe in which from now on the man of the earth, free and a thousand times prouder, would develop. I listened to him to the end and went down, leaving Liza and Kurilov. (She greedily absorbed everything that surrounded us—this noble air of friendship; this magnificent emotion arising from the contemplation of heroic deeds; and there was such childlike enthusiasm in her eyes that I had radically to revise my original opinion of her.)

Night had fallen. High in the sky, brilliant and twice as large as the moon, shone an antique hieroglyph, signifying longevity. In gigantic parks, under trees, people danced; the light wind of their movements still clings to my face. I heard laughter and tender words; it was sad having to leave Ocean on such a night. Making my way through the throng, I felt almost like an old man . . .

Some sort of glittering melodious insects flitted through the air above; I fancied that they, too, were singing. I saw one of them, which had been flying from far off, hit a lantern at full speed and drop with folded wings, sated and dead. (So that was how the problem of death was solved *there!*) I lengthened my steps; I had to hurry, because real and urgent events were tearing me back from my wanderings in the gleaming unknown.

Jan Drda

THE CASE OF MATEJ REZAC

IT IS SATURDAY, THE ELEVENTH OF JULY, THE FESTIVAL OF Pope Pius. The grain in the ears cracks quietly from the heat. The grapes are small and green, such stunted little peas. Through the woods resound the axes of men; every now and then a log of wood rides along the sluice. When it falls into the Vydruvka, a white frayed tongue of foam spouts to a height, and licks the boulder on the bank. The fellows curse, reckoning it as one of the requirements at the ceremony of the launching of the timber.

"Goddam it! Devil take t'confounded thing!"

With a hook on a pole they then draw near to the log which the shore current is already turning on its back, and insert a hosier through the hole cut in it, as is right and fitting in their trade.

Then, availing themselves of the spare moment, they go off to the granite rock, reach out a hand between the whitened stones into the cool depths and withdraw a bottle, in order to freshen up their throats. The red Goddeshand wine splashes into their coated gullets, as when a victualler drains off from a bigger barrel into a smaller one.

At this moment a woman, of whom there are plenty in the

Trantinec, Pucalek and brewery rye fields, is to be observed on the other side of the rivulet. If such a one is only a little good-looking, the timbermen lift the bottle overhead in her honour, and, out-yelling the current, bawl out some of their crude jokes.

Look, Ancka, the daughter of Karas, is coming straight to the Vydruvka in order to carry off to the Trantinec field a sheaf of rye straw soaked at the edge of the river. Little fishes disperse before her like arrows as she enters the water, hoisting her skirt high above her knees. Then she tries to roll away the stones from the sheaves with her other hand. But the stones are too heavy, and Ancka has no other resource than to take the hem of her skirt into her teeth, and push away with both hands against the dead weight.

As she holds her skirt in her teeth, stooping down over the mirror of water, she uncovers her firm, sunburnt legs high above the knees where they merge into white.

"Ancka!" calls out a timberman across the river.

Ancka straightened her back only a little, and regarded this good-for-nothing with her eye across the hem of her kerchief which had slipped a little.

"Ancka, you shine!" boisterously laughed the fellow, who all this while had been looking at the white lime wood of her uncovered thighs.

"Ah wish to God, you hoodlum . . ." And the rest of Ancka's imprecation is lost in the din of a falling log which reared itself erect at the end of the sluice, and jumped into the waves like a viper, so that they spilled themselves even on the dry sand of the farther bank.

In order to give weight to her angry expostulation, Ancka lets go from her teeth her skirt which is already sodden with water, leaves the hem of her garment to the tender mercies of the Vydruvka, lifts up a stone over her head with both hands, and flings it into the river, so that the strain of it almost breaks her back. She does not throw it further than three metres, fragments of the disturbed water return to her clothes, but Ancka is satisfied. She has said what she wanted to.

Then she clutches the sheaf, which is already turning along the current like a straw goddess bearing winter away from the village, pulls it out on to the dry ground, and wrings out the hem of her skirt.

Above, on the field, around one gigantic jug full of Goddeshand

ale, sit the timbermen, and, one comrade handing to another the loaf and pot of dripping, they have their lunch. Near the gang, with a concoction which is called coffee, the women have crept together, and, munching in their mouths great hunks of bread, chatter and gossip and pull to pieces the living and the dead.

Only Pepina Rezac, good soul with a fruitful womb, does not eat, and, quite bowed down with unhappiness, surveys her hands, scratched by the rasping stubble. It is common knowledge in Goddeshand that she had been a widow since Thursday. Matej remained there under the stone with the mine boss, and they did not find these two, because the staging in the mine burned.

She has been with him only a year. They said that that was a long enough experience. Not because he was bad. God forbid. Rather that he was a wild fellow who would not be gainsaid, and a poacher into the bargain. What fears she has lived through, even at night, when other miner's wives were sleeping contentedly with their men in a warm bed.

And nevertheless she was fond of him. When, at last year's village-wake on St. Peter's Day, he had come for her to Konetopy where she was in service, and danced her around, paying no attention to the lads of the village, she knew that she could go with this fellow anywhere that he wished.

She had on then a white dress, strewn everywhere, on the back, on the breast and even on the thighs with blue and red flowers. She resembled a mountain meadow through the snow from which spring life is irresistibly bursting.

"Are 'ee from t'town?" asked the dancer.

"Aye. A miner. Employed at t'Anna Marie."

They had danced together waltz after waltz, polka, redowa, and again waltz, as if the whole hall belonged to them. Whenever Pepina was turned towards the centre of the hall, she noticed an island of young fellows who had formed up in the midst of the dancers, and she saw among them the glowering faces of those who were envious. And then, when in Matej's arms she turned sharply with her face to the wall, where the Konetopy women were sitting, she saw their tattling mouths hard at it. And so, turning to the centre and then to the wall, she noticed that she had suddenly brought on herself the fury of the whole of Konetopy because of this miner.

Then he had led her out from the hall, and she had slowly

guided him to her favourite spot, to the fishpond in the wood, where she was in the habit of sitting among the willows as soon as she could flee for a while from her household duties.

This water was full of carp and other fish, and on clear days Pepina often stooped over the cranesbill, and noticed how the fish stand in the water at the very mouth of the gully through which the surplus water escaped into the underground conduit.

The fishes' mouths squeezed themselves between the laths of the grating, the greenish-blue backs of the bald ones, and the iridescent mother-of-pearl of the scales reflected the sun's rays.

However, if the pike, old bearded sorceress from the deep pool of the southern edge, wandered by chance to the lattice, she dispersed the lazy verminous carp, and rustled the water so strongly that it could be heard as far off as the meadow under the fishpond. Then she pursued the bald carp into the shoal between the horsetail and the reeds, and Pepina watched breathlessly how she cut wide streaks of water with the sharp knife of her back.

But at this evening hour, when she led her dancing partner to the fishpond, the water was silent and calm. The smacking of the mouths of the carp had ceased when the fish retired to rest, only the thin tinfoil of the stars twinkled about the surface almost imperceptibly, and at whiles a water bird, awakened from a dream by the scampering of a musk rat, protested.

On the left of the fishpond, where the bank, covered with fine sand, sloped gradually down to the water, the young fellows watered the horses day after day, riding naked on horseback into the waves, which were greenly phosphorescent under the full lamp of the moon. Then even the girls came to indulge themselves in the pleasure of a nocturnal bath, and they also descended naked into the water with hair flying free, and with a sensation of mysterious, voluptuous dread which increased in the black water in the same measure as they plunged themselves under the surface.

But on this particular day, because there was music and a village-wake, the banks of the fishpond were deserted. The night sky, miraculously clear and full of shining spangles, entirely covered the mirror of the fishpond. Some of the stars were only a hands-breadth away from the very bank itself, others farther and farther, and some quite in the centre of the dark surface.

They looked at the water from among the cranesbill, and saw nothing but two heavens, one motionless overhead, and one

changing in the waveplay under their feet, and Pepina quite forgot the village at their backs.

At this moment the miner pressed her hand and her breast.

"Who are 'ee?" she asked timorously.

"Ah'm Matej Rezac," he replied, not releasing either hand or breast. She drew away from him in order to free her bosom of the oppressive burden, but she allowed her right hand to lie in his left.

"So that's why t'fowk here didn't begin to scrap wi' 'ee?"

For in the countryside Matej Rezac was reputed a poacher, a strong fellow, and a brawler whom nobody could get the better of.

"Aye?" Matej said at this, entirely without interest, and again placed his hand on her breast, but this time only as lightly as if he were behaving like a thief who wishes to leave no traces and is afraid of the very slightest din. She did not defend herself. She rather made it appear as if she noticed nothing. Matej, content with this dissimulation, held her hand without the slightest movement, even when it became a strain for him. He feared to lose this position on her form. He stood motionless, and looked at the black water.

But the hand became heavier, and after a time pressed against Pepina so hard that it began to hurt.

"Ah mun go home now," she said in order to free herself of the paining hand. She retreated a step, and he let her go. She couldn't remain here, and, even if each step caused her anxiety, she had to go in the dark to the village, to keep her word. But Matej, as if he had suddenly awoken from a dream, hastened after her, and pressed her so that she couldn't choose to defend herself.

"Don't be afraid. Ah'll wed 'ee," he said to her when they parted. And he married her. It isn't a year ago yet. Continually she held him fast, continually he escaped her, continually he returned and went away again, when he wished and as he wished. And when in the morning he returned home, wet with dew, bespattered with mud and chilled by the cold night air, he lay close to her, and lightly kissed her hair so that he should not wake her.

God, how fond she was of him at this time, recollects Pepina, and opens the floodgates of quiet weeping.

The fellows, who meanwhile have drunk up half the jugful, are listening to timberman Mechura.

He went this morning with the timber gang which returned yesterday from the busy world, and he has heard strange things.

"They said that some important chap were to be shot. That there could be a war on account o' it."

"God forbid," the women cross themselves.

"Shut up, fools," yells farmer Trantinec at the fellows.

"What sort o' a war, then?"

"Ah'm nobbut telling 'ee what Ah were told," Mechuar defended himself.

"Talk. People's confounded lies."

But Farmer Trantinec was in high repute among them because he was a well-read fellow, and chairman of the Local Benefit Society. They therefore considered it discreet to stop talking about it. Just as surely they will talk it over when they come home to Goddeshand from the field, slowly, with swinging steps, and with the scythes, which accomplish their daily toil, on their shoulders.

But before they had eaten up their bread and finished drinking their jugs to the bottoms, a new disturbance interrupted their task. The knacker's lad, the middle son of old Hon, a snivelling twelve-year-old apprentice, came hurrying up the dusty road between the fields, and, running breathless into the meadow until he was among the sitting women, he blurted out the news:

"Matej . . . Rezac . . . has . . . come . . . back."

If there'd been a sudden thunderburst, they would not have been so agitated as at this moment.

"He come back . . . by t'Dusnicky gallery."

Pepina wanted to cry out with gladness, but no sooner had she opened her mouth than she was overcome with giddiness. It was only because she was sitting on the sheaf that she did not fall full length.

"Now don't you! But that's rare news, Pepina!"

But Pepina was again in a faint already, and the obliging women ran with the beer jug to the Vydruvka for cold water. And then she came to again, soaked and dripping, and again became suffused with shame because of her weakness.

"For Christ's sake, tell us what's happened?" the timbermen seized hold of the boy. Hon's lad shuffled about from one foot to another, stupefied at his own importance, and, in his embarrassment, unravelled the cord with which he had secured his braces to his trousers.

"Well, it were like this. He come to us i't'yard a few minutes after ten, an he tells father to take t'dung cart, so that somebody

or other can fetch t'mine boss." Mechura reached into his hip pocket for a flask with rum and offered it to Pepina, who was still weak.

"Drink your fill, Pepina. Go on, lass, gulp it dahn."

Pepina swallowed a few heavy gulps.

"So you see, my bonny lass. God don't forget nobody," Aut Rank consoled her, and with a broad, toil-roughened hand rubbed her in the small of the back until she straightened up.

"Hallo, hallo," called out the timbermen from the opposite side of the river, seeing that something of importance had occurred. Hon's lad had to tell these fellows from Perlov the news. Everyone of them of course knew Matej Rezac as well as his own hand or his pipe.

"Matej . . . Rezac . . . has . . . come . . . back!"

As when you throw a stone, the cry flew across the river, and rolled a little way down the hillside.

"Hallo! Hallo!" The wind did not carry here the words of the scene which was being enacted on the other, Perlov, bank of the River Vydruvka. The fellows one after another brandished what they had to hand, axe, hook, ropes or osier, bottle or crowbar, in order that they should show Pepina how delighted they were.

"Hip, hip, Hurrah," the knacker's boy answered them from the other bank, and, remembering his knacker's honour, handed down from father to son, immediately began to roar to the fellows:

Perlov fellahs can't be beat,
Fought abaht the horse's meat . . .

But nobody pays any more attention to the knacker's boy. Of course, he gobbles up cats, and his mother smears his bread with dog dripping and with bitch's scraps. And on Sunday he has a crow for dinner.

"Get goin, fellows, get goin," cried out the foremen on this bank and on that, and axes on wood, scythes into stalks, laid on at their work. Only Rezac's wife stayed in the centre of the field alone.

"Well, what abaht it, Pepina?" farmer Trantinec said to her. "You'd like to go home, eh, lass?"

And there was something warm in his voice, as if the sun had touched his words before they got from his mouth to the ears of Mrs. Rezac.

"Be off wi' 'ee, and make him some coffee, and come back and tell us all abaht it." Little Pepina Rezac, with her legs and hands

scratched all over by the eternal stubble, resembling a rosy Misensky apple, with the ribbons of her wide petticoat swinging about her low over her thighs, breathless, and soaked with the water which the well-disposed women have poured over her, swung along the field alone. Home to Kocanda.

God be thanked, she isn't a widow after all.

Between Tuesday and Wednesday she had had such a dream. All of a sudden a black horse had come on her from the brewer's yard. Pepina had on a white apron. As if she were dressed for the wedding of her younger sister Tonka. A wedding in a dream, that of itself alone is a bad thing. Suddenly this horse had come and immediately, with those yellow teeth at her apron, caught her right in the middle, and dragged her apron from her body. And at this he had neighed so sadly that a cold shiver ran down Pepina's spine.

And when she awoke, she was entirely bathed in sweat. She reached out to her side. Matej wasn't there. Where would he be? In the forest! Certainly the gamekeepers had shot him. Whenever anybody dreams of black horses, something bad happens. She began to cry.

"What you cryin' for?" Matej's brother Vincek woke up.

"You crazy woman," he cried out to her, when she told him about her dream. "D'you think anyone could hit Matej?"

Then she had quietened, and began praying until Matej returned. His hair was full of pine needles, and his shirt was wet, as if he had been across the fishpond. He had scarcely crawled under the featherbed before he fell sound asleep and started snoring.

"Matej, don't 'ee go dahn t'shaft today," she begged at five o'clock in the morning, for she couldn't get a wink of sleep on account of her fright.

"Don't be daft," Matej, who had just breakfasted on bread and grey corn liquor, had said to her. He cut up some bread into the pot, stirred it round with a spoon, and ate it up to the very last crumb. It gives a miner strength. That was the way in which his forbears had breakfasted before they went to the daily hammering. Then he went out, kissing Pepina on the forehead. That year which they had together he used to do it every day, and nobody could say whence he took this unusual habit. Josefa went at six o'clock to Trantinec, where it was the first day of harvest.

At eleven, Barbora, the smallest of the bells in the church of

St. Barbora, rang out. They rang it at a disaster, at an alarm, at a fire, and for miners on their last journey. When she heard the bell, she knew that an accident had happened to Matej. Then people came to the field to tell her about it. A fall of rock in number eighteen. Seven of them were left there. Matej was with them. And the seventh was Councillor Zimmerheier himself, the mine boss.

It was said that someone of the six had caused the explosion. Finally they had to wall up the whole gallery, as all the staging was in a flame. Behind this wall of red brick Death was gleaning. Six miners and one boss. No other person is so cruelly just.

Pepina Rezac is already down in the Barborka Square, she sees the church tower, the bells sounding.

Jakub, the biggest of them, still remembers the Swedish War. It is said that at that time folk drove cattle behind Zarici into the woods, that they themselves crept into the seams and shafts, that they left the town empty. The Swedes looted what they could. They drove the horses into the church of St. Barbora, they bedded them down with straw on the granite floor and the gravestones, and lashed the ends of the reins to the wrought ironwork and to the pillars of the altar. Then on a certain morning the straw caught fire. The church of St. Barbora was entirely burnt out, the three bells broke away, and, sticking into the ground, penetrated it to a depth of ten feet. There remained only the beam on which Jakub was hung. Burnt-up, they wrung their black hands to the heavens. The blaze damaged the beautifully decorated chasing of the bell, melted the pewter from which the bellfounder had cast a psalm to the praise of God, but the bell remained. Only the ropes, by which the bellringers' hands swung it, had burned.

It was a miracle. Everyone said so. When the Swedes went off in the direction of Obornice, the folk of Goddeshand crawled out from the cellars, mines and hewed-out seams, and, first of all driving down the cattle from the Zaricky and Perlov thickets, went in procession in front of the burnt church-tower, and said their prayers to St. Jakub the Elder, who was the undoubted cause of this miracle. And only a revolt among the miners prevented the church from being renamed St. Jakubs. The miners, however, successfully held out for their Barbora, and so at this place, where Kaiser Street runs from the palm into ringfinger of the Good Lord, there was erected the new church of St. Barbora, the most precious

ring which the folk of Goddeshand could thread on such an illustrious finger. Then they removed St. Jakub, who still bore a memento of the terrible fire in the pewter chasing of his rim, to the new church tower.

Mrs. Magdalena Trantinec from Zarice donated, at a cost of several hundred ducats, the second of the golden bells, consecrated to her patroness. Jakub sounded on the most solemn occasions, at the Resurresction, the festival of Corpus Christi, on Christmas Day and at the Miners' Parade. Then to Magdalena was given the task of pealing at weddings. If a bride was truly an honest virgin, the strokes of Magdalena were regular: *Vir—gin Vir—gin Vir—gin,* she announces to the world from the tower.

However, woe betide if the virginity of the bride were in doubt. If it were, not even the best bellringer could induce Magdalena to sound properly. On old Percival, who set swinging the clapper of Magdalena, many a bride surreptitiously pressed even a golden ducat, so that he might tame Magdalena. But mostly it was in vain. Let him swing her clapper as he would, let him attempt if necessary to lay down his life to hold her back, at the third stroke she returned to the side on which she had just vibrated after the second stroke, whereupon, with a too loud and unsymmetrical beat, she called out discordantly, so that it seemed the bell was discordantly announcing: *Virgin crackt, Virgin crackt, Virgin crakttt.*

On such an occasion the folk of Goddeshand coughed into their palms and into their wide blue handkerchiefs, married women who had been through it already sniggered into their aprons, and girls for whom this test was still waiting either proudly tossed their heads or blushed in advance, according to their natures.

Barbora was the smallest and the saddest of the three bells. They cast her from metal which they dug out of the earth after the conflagration, and in memory of this melancholy event she got a melancholy task. Whenever her voice resounded over Goddeshand, the cord of fear was drawn more tightly around the women's throats. The mines were ablaze. A seam had given way. Death was marching over the countryside, touching the western horizon with the hem of her garment. And hardly anyone for whom they once rang Barbora survived the ordeal.

They said of such people that they would endure for a hundred years, since they had already escaped the toothy one once, and in place of their extinguished candle of life, Death had to light

another, a new one. And only when this burns itself down, has Death full rights.

As Pepina looks at the tower, this prediction occurs to her. And suddenly through her tears, of which she does not know where they are falling, she sings to herself:

"I'll be so for us. I'll be a hundred years for us."

Translated from the Czech by W. P. JOWETT.

"A CHILD IS ROCKED" — *Maurice Carpenter*

Conversation Piece for Dr. Edith Sitwell

Cloudy from Cumberland, a shadow fell across
the shallow brook. And all the mountains walked
by his side. The tablets in his hand
talked as he wrapped the Sinai of his cloud
about him. Sailed a folded paper boat,
the boy, upon the brook, involved and innocent.
"Who are you child? your disconcerting eyes
are wide; their light is bright and alien."
"I am the inventor of the world," replied
the boy. "My frowning skies are terrible with pride."

"God is the cause of all, and you are not
God, my son," said the old man picking his ear
and shifting on his feet. "Yet it was God begot
in me the world refracted in a tear.
The woods and mountains in my reverend fear
walked taller, yet you do not tremble too,
but sail your paper boat in this clear
shallow stream, and not a yard or two
is yours; yet you say the world was made by you."

"I am a sullen angel; all my look
is lies. I hold no hope nor antidote,
and all the little shallows of this brook
empty their essence into space. My boat
sails among suns and savages; the hot
noons hover on my figurehead
of Venus with her dainty little tits.
I break the shell of nature; she opens red
into my night to shine her searchlights to horizons in my head."

The old man shuddered, suddenly grew tall
remote and lonely; finally he said:
"You are not what I sought, no, not at all.
No child takes the pride of Lucifer to bed
and still survives. I could hold up my head
of water that would wash you innocent
if I were young and pure, but I am dead,
and you not born, not his half century.
The sands of Africa have tanned your flesh already."

"What are you looking for old monument
with a sore and hoary head? I see your eyebrows
dance in the water and your head is bent
with disapproval. Shall I probe your past?
Shall I remind you of Annette? she is lost
in the light leaves of France. She died
on the barricades of reason. I remember
my granite mother. Like her coast
you are eroded; your green trickle chilled."

"You know me then? I am looking for a child."

"I am a child. I am no man's father.
Mother was simple chaos and despair
burning the barracks of my bowels. Rather
a tall father than this fevered air
nurturing nightmare, driving farther, far
into the depths and distances of dreams, in metal
shelled; supported by dark scaffolding the star
burns tungsten at the top and drops a petal
onto my hand and sears it. I am the rhetoric
of your present jungle; the other half of truth."

"That blessed dawn it was good to be alive
I climbed the barricades of reason, heard
those granite guardians, pilgrims of a second English
revolution lifting fists of passionate cliches
into my five dimensioned dream. Unreason
deepened: I turned away for a season
hearing a trumpet in another country
sudden, maternal, sinful. My unease
took root; the burning coin of the sun
spun round that infancy, bred enemies."

"Yet I am everlasting friend and enemy
of living man. I am their steel dream.
I am the original ravished innocent,
split and pitiful. I am the thing I seem,
the chaos you knock against; the mocking lemur
that leers from the stately tree. It is you and me.
Deny my truth, for all my complication
you cannot. It is your thought. I'll seduce you,
old moral monument. I know the gay Annette
danced in your father heart and divided it."

"I left my childhood in the lanes of France.
Fatherhood laughed at me. A curtain of sky
weeps in my west. A revolution danced
to petrifaction in my heart; now my
fervour is folded in myself. I am no lost
leader; I am a schoolroom ghost.
Yet you have shown me that my caul of cloud
covers a forgotten child . . ."

"Am I the one?
Yes, William Wordsworth, poet, you were proud
once, and trailed your frock coat on a concrete road."

"I climbed my own colossus, standing
in granite on Helvellyn, lifted up
the stiff lip of a statue with a hand
of centuries and disappeared inside.
There in the dark my navel string was tied
to birth and death. I heard a gifted child
cry in the night of my loins, whimpering
for the sun. And so I came to this glade,
and this green stream. I find its turbulence
disturbing. I am lost in your murky infancy."

"You guessed. I was Rimbaud. I wandered offices
of hell to seek the infancy that gazed
out of the Odeons, the plate glass surfaces
of Oxford street arcades, the dark facades
of a perpetual past; absinthe of fantasy
writing a rainbow on refreshing water
of this unpolluted brook. Yet I am lost,
lost in the jungle of my obsolete guns; one leg
knocks on one cylinder. Yes, I was killed,
and vomit my green survival on the world."

"Sky cracks across like crystal, into splinters
in the tall morning peopled with a
flotilla of pigeons. They perch on the air's lintel
and weep for these who climb a wind that withers
into dry tunnels. Come down again, alight
on the flowering mast, it is blasted by my breath.
And so the boat rots, half-submerged in a creak,
while out of a granite childhood struts a doll
to fall spread-eagled by the blood-stained wall."

"My boat rides seven streams into the estuary
of the flesh, the Severn, Avon, Thames
and Seine, to empty to that cloudy sea
that pours its water to the milky way and stems
into the skies and Plieades. I am
the master of these stars, all galaxies
are milk of pearls upon my outstretched palm.
Yet I dream of this small stream, my boat a butterfly
sails to the green door of a whitewashed home
where a mother bright as bread cries out my name."

"That mother lived. I see you, boy,
drop like a rose, a thin transparent flame
dissolves in smoke, your gazer's crystal eye
breaks, and, the prism clouded, you walk lame.
And I, an old man, suffering the same
strange transmutation, petals folding slowly
over my tired skull. Your mouth still innocent
as I sink to sleep with the seven. A bloom
suffuses this new sleep. I feel the roll
of centuries. One child is rocked as the curtain falls."

William Morgan

THE LABOURER'S SUNDAY NIGHT

Methodically I prepare my leisure hour.
My secret smiles hover and fold me in the dusk,
Then ring great noiseless circles through the house
Disturbing the dark and firelight
Converging over the old man's chair.
Scissor each roughed edge, collar, cuff, nail,
Ponder for my tie, then choose the same,
The one I wore a year ago.
Slide steel curved shoe-horn: bow the knotted lace:
Black-gloss the weathered grey of toe-caps,
Then drop the folds of trousers to cover down
The unthreadings and the sided heels.
Pass out to amaze the moon, wink stars to doubt,
Break banks of hills, dismay the flush of floods,
Hold up the winds, dance leaping through the larch-tops,
All in the harmless metaphors of Sunday nights
As I wind the windy hill.
Tread softly for the dog
When at last gate I lip a whistle on the hour,
But all is swept on the gulfing flow of darkness,
And a second is caught and answered by the wind's low moan,
Then, night-pressed, inconsolate, I grieve
The waitings, dejections and brooked
anticipations
Of all young men everywhere.
Swinging the drooping gate, I smell a rose
and pig,
Sidle the corner, mount two steps and tap
Twice over on the orange-curtained pane.

Suddenly eyes and laughs are peering on the cold,
Suns and smiles are floating round me in the dark.
"Hullo! it's you: it's you."
"How is everybody? And please I'm come."

DAVID REMEMBERING LLANDEWI-BREFI

Yes, I was that one, flashing my hill-voice
To shatter the unsmiling Synod into silence.
Not till then was I undeceived nor did the bare rock
Quiver beneath my feet nor the truth speak through me.
Remembering the beast skin, dry bread, the false pride
In legendary skill—because holy Paulinus
Lost and gained the light—till the wicked wind whispered
And the hair-shirt burned, was old Paulinus blind
Or soft with age and love, the near grave's weeping?
And could he see when I had cheated with the sign?
In Glastonbury I burned austerely into holiness
Still striving to deceive myself—the field-work
Without cattle, the cockcrow and the midnight prayers,
Penance, milk and water, the pretended joy of pain.
How could I have believed in extended powers?
But that day the wind threshed the mountain trees
The grey rock heaved, cracked the stone heart of Wales
And reared me, David, one, a voice, indisputable
Above the Synod, pierced with the sword of love.
That is the fact—and Dubritius and his bishops wept,
Then left me lonely in my greatness at Minevia
O Holiness, Holiness, Holiness.
I am old now, disputed by the years
Mouthing the pious hopes of March, my words
Become strange songs in strutting mouths.
But you should not seek books or discover
Did I slay Pelagius, burn out heresy—
I tell you each age judges what is right.

You say I am a saint, and blessed or unblessed
Am many things to many men: for all
Create what they will believe. But I swear to you
That when I stood at Brefi, when the earth shook
And my flower burst its yellow petals to the sun,
Passion, the long-separated lover seized me
Till I grew great and cried with the grace of God
And with the love of men and countrymen.

Explanatory footnotes:

David.

David was born in Cardiganshire early in the sixth century. He became a priest under the direction of the holy man Paulinus. Paulinus in his old age became blind with much prayer and weeping and the legend goes that David cured his blindness with the sign of the cross.

Glastonbury.

At Glastonbury David built a monastery where he imposed a strict life of penance and manual labour on the monks of his order, whereby they tilled the land without the aid of cattle.

The Synod at Llandewi-Brefi.

Where David denounced the Pelagian heresy. The ground is said to have risen beneath his feet so that David could be seen and heard by all the assembly.

Dubritius.

Archbishop of Caerleon was moved to tears by the eloquence of David at the Synod of Llandewi-Brefi and resigned his see to David who was persuaded to accept it by the bishops. He transferred it to Minevia (now St. David's) where according to Giraldeis, "He was the great ornament of his age, and the glory of the British Church."

Chronicle & Polemic

INTERVIEW WITH *PABLO NERUDA*

"What are the fundamental reasons for your political activities?"

Reaching an impasse in my literary work, I sought for a more intelligible path, and found it in the struggle against unhappiness. This unhappiness is no metaphysical or religious conception; it is a consequence of social injustice of which people themselves are guilty. Such a path, such a struggle appeared to me as most worthy. I now feel that I am truly doing my duty. I was a writer wandering through empty

night trying to break through walls. Now I am happy. We must walk in the middle of the road, towards life. A writer who stands aloof from politics is a myth, invented and supported by capitalism. In Dante's time no such writers existed. *Art for art's sake* is a doctrine preached by big business. Theophile Gautier glorified the ideals of the rich tradesmen and exploiters. The fact that such ideals were adopted by writers was a victory for rising capitalism. The flight of Rimbaud, the great rebel, to Ethiopia, was an indisputable triumph for the Charlesville sausage-merchants.

We should build a different world, one less tragic, a world of happiness. For this the writer must be a modest soldier of the great army, he must march ahead without halting or wavering from side to side.

"Do you consider your participation in politics as being permanent, or only dictated by a passing passion, by temporary circumstances?"

I think you can find any fault in my books except that of inconstancy. Had you ever seen the hovels in which the people of Chile are cooped, you would understand that, having chosen this path and this struggle, I cannot turn back.

"What is your attitude to the prevalent division of the world into the West and the East? Do you consider a third world-war as imminent?"

The term Western Culture was fabricated and spread by those crafty killers, Hitler, Goebbels. They concocted and bottled this elixir; and today it is being freely distributed by Marshall, Ford Motors, Cocacola and other similarly disinterested philosophers who depend on Standard Oil or the manufacture of Flying Fortresses.

For me, hunger and starvation are equally distressing when found in India or the slums of Western capitals. For me, the spirit of inquiry, science and culture of the Soviet Union is indisputably far more progressive and fruitful than the spirit of mercantile profit which dominates the United States. Stalingrad proved that human culture was rescued from mortal danger by those who bore Soviet weapons, who read their marxist books, who were imbued with the fertilizing spirit of the Communist Party. Chaikovsky, Marx, Bach, Shakespeare, Pushkin, Goya, and Pavlov—their works and thoughts—they all belong to humanity as a whole. Divide culture: that is the vulgar propaganda of the imperialists. The farce of modern times consists of the fact that the corrupt camarilla of Chiang Kai Shek is advertised as the bearer of an ancient civilization, while U.S. army-officers are meanwhile murdering the Greek shepherds sung by Theocritus. The hypocrites! Senor Gonzales Videla [the Chilean President who tried to arrest Neruda] considers himself a *Western Purger*, and the struggle waged against him, *Asiatic*. Were the times different, we would merely laugh at that. Till recently I did not believe in the possibility of a new war. But the Wall-Street condottieri with their bombs in their bosoms excite apprehension. It is difficult to guess what they will do next, for they are now confronted with alarmed peoples claiming a better life and fuller rights. . . . The U.S.A. States Department is cold-bloodedly and criminally preparing America for a new war. But neither our people nor any other wishes for war: that is indisputable. Our duty consists of hourly fighting this premeditated crime.

From *La Hora* (Argentine).

The Mental Traveller

(1) *I travel'd thro' a Land of Men,*
A Land of Men and Women too,
And heard and saw such dreadful things
As cold Earth wanderers never knew.

(2) *For there the Babe is born in joy*
That was begotten in dire woe;
Just as we Reap in joy the fruit
Which we in bitter tears did sow.

(3) *And if the Babe is born a Boy*
He's given to a Woman Old,
Who nails him down upon a rock,
Catches his shrieks in cups of gold.

(4) *She binds iron thorns around his head,*
She pierces both his hands and feet,
She cuts his heart out at his side
To make it feel both cold and heat.

(5) *Her fingers number every Nerve,*
Just as a Miser counts his gold;
She lives upon his shrieks and cries,
And she grows young as he grows old.

(6) *Till he becomes a bleeding youth,*
And she becomes a Virgin bright;
Then he rends up his Manacles
And binds her down for his delight.

(7) *He plants himself in all her Nerves,*
Just as a Husbandman his mould;
And she becomes his dwelling place
And Garden fruitful seventy fold.

(8) *An aged Shadow, soon he fades,*
wand'ring round an Earthly Cot,
Full filled all with gems and gold
Which he by industry had got.

(9) *And these are the gems of the Human Soul,*
The rubies and pearls of a lovesick eye,
The countless gold of the akeing heart,
The martyr's groan and the lover's sigh.

(10) *They are his meat, they are his drink;*
He feeds the Beggar and the Poor
And the wayfaring Traveller:
For ever open is his door.

(11) *His grief is their eternal joy;*
They make the roofs and walls to ring;
Till from the fire on the hearth
A little Female Babe does spring.

(12) *And she is all of solid fire*
And gems and gold, that none his hand
Dare stretch to touch her Baby form,
Or wrap her in his swaddling-band.

(13) *But She comes to the Man she loves,*
If young or old, or rich or poor;
They soon drive out the aged Host,
A Beggar at another's door.

(14) *He wanders weeping far away,*
Untill some other take him in;
Oft blind and age-bent, sore distrest,
Untill he can a Maiden win.

(15) *And to allay his freezing Age*
The Poor Man takes her in his arms;
The Cottage fades before his sight,
The Garden and its lovely Charms.

(16) *The Guests are scatter'd thro' the land,*
For the Eye altering alters all;
The Senses roll themselves in fear,
And the flat Earth becomes a Ball;

(17) *The stars, sun, Moon all shrink away,*
A desart vast without a bound,
And nothing left to eat or drink,
And a dark desart all around.

(18) *The honey of her Infant lips,*
The bread and wine of her sweet smile,
The wild game of her roving Eye,
Does him to Infancy beguile;

(19) *For as he eats and drinks he grows*
Younger and younger every day;
And on the desart wild they both
Wander in terror and dismay.

(20) *Like the wild Stag she flees away,*
Her fear plants many a thicket wild;
While he pursues her night and day,
By various arts of Love beguil'd.

* * * *

(21) *By various arts of Love and Hate,*
Till the wide desart planted o'er
With Labyrinths of wayward Love,
Where roam the Lion, Wolf and Boar.

(22) *Till he becomes a wayward Babe,*
And she a weeping Woman Old.
Then many a Lover wanders here;
The Sun and Stars are nearer roll'd.

(23) *The trees bring forth sweet Extacy*
To all who in the desart roam;
Till many a City there is Built,
And many a pleasant Shepherd's home.

(24) *But when they find the frowning Babe,*
Terror strikes thro' the region wide
They cry "The Babe! the Babe is
Born!"
And flee away on Every side.

(25) *For who dare touch the frowning form,*
His arm is wither'd to its root;
Lions, Boars, Wolves, all howling flee,
And every Tree does shed its fruit.

(26) *And none can touch that frowning*
form,
Except it be a Woman Old;
She nails him down upon the Rock,
And all is done as I have told.

See page 46.

LEONID LEONOV: Soviet author—one of the group (*Fedin, Sholokhov*, etc.) which, in the mid-Twenties, founded the new Soviet novel. The passage here given is from his latest novel ROAD TO OCEAN, written in several time levels, in which *Ocean* is the symbol of the future. His work is notable for its mixture of psychological insight and poetic energy.

JAN DRDA: Czech writer, president of the Union of Czech writers, whose work has folk qualities of warmth and poetic raciness. The tale here given is from the series organised in novel-form under the title *Goddesband*.

JULIAN TUWIM: the examination of this great Polish poet's work is continued from ARENA 2.

NANCY CUNARD: poet; has made a special study of the fate of the exiled Spanish writers.

MELPO AXIOTI: Greek novelist, whose book 20TH CENTURY has a sharp lyrical sweep that catches the poignancy of her people in their resistance to oppression.

GOETHE: this typical poem by Goethe is *Arena's* tribute to the bi-centenary of that great poet.

ARNOLD KETTLE: Lecturer in English at Leeds University.

WILLIAM MORGAN: young Welsh farmer, recently graduated from Ruskin College. A selection of his poems will appear shortly in the series of KEY POETS.

CHARLES DUFF: the well-known author of A HANDBOOK ON HANGING, CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS, and editor of SPAIN AT WAR.

MAURICE CARPENTER: a selection of this well-known poet's work will also be included among the KEY POETS in 1950.